Encounter

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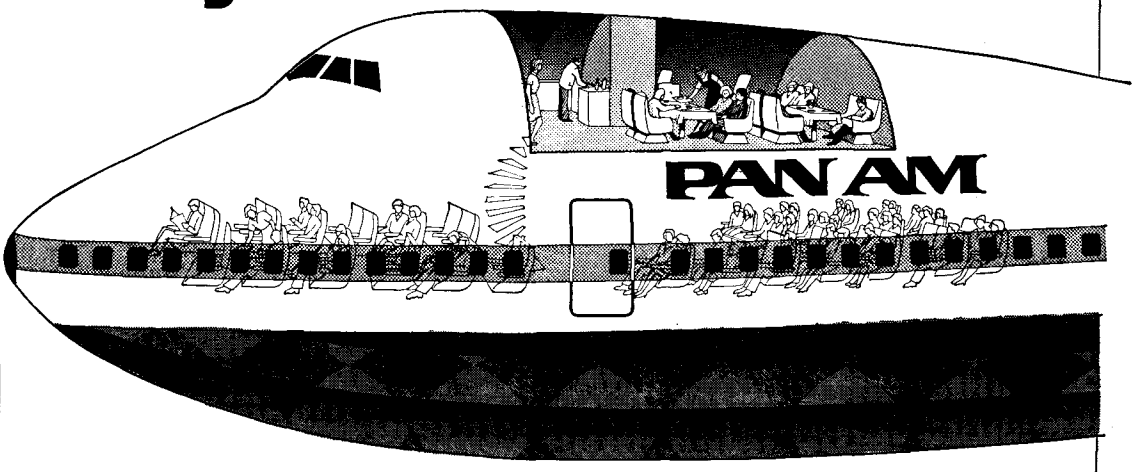

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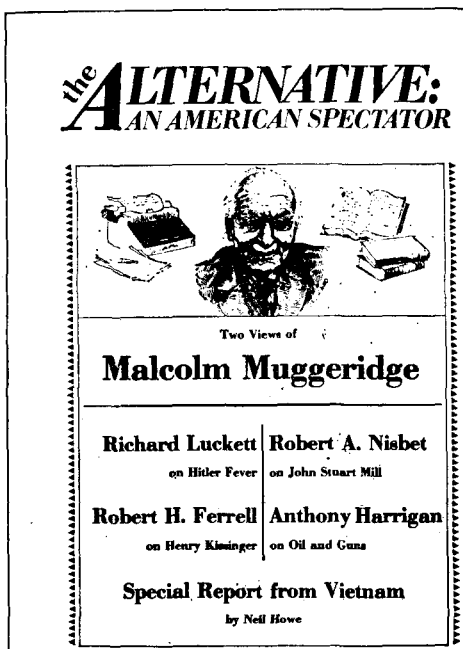

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R. Prawer Jhabvala

How I Became A Holy Mother

ON MY 23RD BIRTHDAY when I was fed up with London and all the rest of it—boy friends, marriages (two), jobs (modelling), best friends that are suddenly your best enemies—I had this letter from my girl friend Sophie who was finding peace in an ashram in South India:

> "... oh Katie you wouldn't know me I'm such a changed person. I get up at 5—*a.m.*!!! I am an absolute vegetarian let alone no meat no eggs either and am making fabulous progress with my meditation. I have a special mantra of my own that Swamiji gave me at a special ceremony and I say it over and over in my mind. The sky here is blue all day long and I sit by the sea and watch the waves and have good thoughts. . . ."

But by the time I got there Sophie had left—under a cloud, it seemed, though when I asked what she had done, they wouldn't tell me but only pursed their lips and looked sorrowful. I didn't stay long in that place. I didn't like the bitchy atmosphere, and that Swamiji was a big fraud, anyone could see that. I couldn't understand how a girl as sharp as Sophie had ever let herself be fooled by such a type. But I suppose if you want to be fooled you are. I found that out in some of the other ashrams I went to. There were some quite intelligent people in all of them but the way they just shut their eyes to certain things, it was incredible. But it is not my role in life to criticise others so I kept quiet and went on to the next place. I went to quite a few of them. These ashrams are a cheap way to live in India and there is always company and it isn't bad for a few days provided you don't get involved in their power politics. I was amazed to come across quite a few people I had known over the years and would never have expected to meet here. It is a shock when you see someone you had last met on the beach at St Tropez now all dressed up in a saffron robe and meditating in some very dusty ashram in Madhya Pradesh. But really I could see their point because they were all as tired as I was of everything we had been doing and this certainly was different.

I enjoyed myself going from one ashram to the other and travelling all over India. Trains and buses are very crowded—I went third class, I had to be careful with my savings—but Indians can tell when you want to be left alone. They are very sensitive that way. I looked out of the window and thought my thoughts. After a time I became quite calm and rested. I hadn't brought too much stuff with me, but bit by bit I discarded most of that too till I had only a few things left that I could easily carry myself. I didn't even mind when my watch was pinched off me one night in a railway rest-room (so-called). I felt myself to be a changed person. Once, at the beginning of my travels, there was a man sitting next to me on a bus who said he was an astrologer. He was a very sensitive and philosophical person—and I must say I was impressed by how many such one meets in India, quite ordinary people travelling third class. After we had been talking for a time and he had told me the future of India for the next 40 years, suddenly out of the blue he said to me "Madam, you have a very sad soul." It was true. I thought about it for days afterwards and cried a bit to myself. I did feel sad inside myself and heavy like with a stone. But as time went on and I kept going round India—the sky always blue like Sophie had said, and lots of rivers and fields as well as desert—just quietly travelling and looking, I stopped feeling like that. Now I was as a matter of fact quite light inside as if that stone had gone.

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THEN I STOPPED travelling and stayed in this one place instead. I liked it better than any of the other ashrams for several reasons. One of them was that the scenery was very picturesque. This cannot be said of all ashrams as many of them seem to be in sort of dust bowls, or in the dirtier parts of very dirty holy cities or even cities that aren't holy at all but just dirty. But this ashram was built on the slope of a mountain, and behind it there were all the other mountains stretching right up to the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas; and on the other side it ran down to the river which I will not say can have been very clean (with all those pilgrims dipping in it) but certainly looked clean from up above and not only clean but as clear and green as the sky was clear and blue. Also along the bank of the river there were many little pink temples with pink cones and they certainly made a pretty scene. Inside the ashram also the atmosphere was good which again cannot be said of all of them, far from it. But the reason the atmosphere was good here was because of the head of this ashram who was called Master. They are always called something like that—if not Swamiji then Maharajji or Babaji or Maharishiji or Guruji; but this one was just called plain Master, in English.

He was full of pep and go. Early in the morning he would say "Well what shall we do today?" and then plan some treat like all of us going for a swim in the river with a picnic lunch to follow. He didn't want anyone to have a dull moment or to fall into a depression which I suppose many there were apt to do, left to their own devices. In some ways he reminded me of those big business types that sometimes (in other days!) took me out to dinner. They too had that kind of superhuman energy and seemed to be stronger than other people. I forgot to say that Master was a big burly man, and as he didn't wear all that many clothes—usually only a loincloth—you could see just how big and burly he was. His head was large too and it was completely shaven so that it looked even larger. He wasn't ugly, not at all. Or perhaps if he was one forgot about it very soon because of all that dynamism.

As I said, the ashram was built on the slope of a mountain. I don't think it was planned at all but had just grown: there was one little room next to the other and the Meditation Hall and the dining hall and Master's quarters—whatever was needed was added and it all ran higgledy-piggledy down the mountain. I had one of the little rooms to myself and made myself very snug in there. The only furniture provided by the ashram was one string bed, but I bought a handloom rug from the Lepers Rehabilitation Centre and I also put up some pictures, like a Tibetan Mandala which was very colourful. Everyone liked my room and wanted to come and spend time there, but I was a bit cagey about that as I needed my privacy. I always had lots to do, like writing letters or washing my hair and I was also learning to play the flute. So I was quite happy and independent and didn't really need company though there was plenty of it, if and when needed.

THERE WERE MASTER'S Indian disciples who were all learning to be swamis. They wanted to renounce the world and had shaved their heads and wore an orange sort of toga thing. When they were ready, Master was going to make them into full swamis. Most of these junior swamis were very young—just boys, some of them—but even those that weren't all that young were certainly so at heart. Sometimes they reminded me of a lot of school kids, they were so full of tricks and fun. But I think basically they were very serious—they couldn't not be, considering how they were renouncing and were supposed to be studying all sorts of very difficult things. The one I liked the best was called Vishwa. I liked him not only because he was the best looking, which he undoubtedly was, but I felt he had a lot going for him. Others said so too—in fact, they all said that Vishwa was the most advanced and was next in line for full initiation. I always let him come and talk to me in my room whenever he wanted to, and we had some interesting conversations.

Then there were Master's foreign disciples. They weren't so different from the other Europeans and Americans I had met in other ashrams except that the atmosphere here was so much better and that made them better too. They didn't have to fight with each other over Master's favours—I'm afraid that was very much the scene in some of the other

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ashrams which were like harems, the way they were all vying for the favour of their guru. But Master never encouraged that sort of relationship, and although of course many of them did have very strong attachments to him, he managed to keep them all healthy. And that's really saying something because, like in all the other ashrams, many of them were not healthy people; through no fault of their own quite often, they had just had a bad time and were trying to get over it.

Once Master said to me "What about you, Katie?" This was when I was alone with him in his room. He had called me in for some dictation—we were all given little jobs to do for him from time to time, to keep us busy and happy I suppose. Just let me say a few words about his room and get it over with. It was *awful*. It had linoleum on the floor of the nastiest pattern, and green strip lighting, and the walls were painted green too and had been decorated with calendars and pictures of what were supposed to be gods and saints but might as well have been Bombay film stars, they were so fat and gaudy. Master and all the junior swamis were terribly proud of this room. Whenever he acquired anything new—like some plastic flowers in a hideous vase—he would call everyone to admire and was so pleased and complacent that really it was not possible to say anything except "Yes, very nice."

When he said "What about you, Katie?" I knew at once what he meant. That was another thing about him—he would suddenly come out with something as if there had already been a long talk between you on this subject. So when he asked me that, it was like the end of a conversation, and all I had to do was think for a moment and then I said "I'm okay." Because that was what he had asked: was I okay? Did I want anything, any help or anything? And I didn't. I really was okay now. I hadn't always been but I got so travelling around on my own and then being in this nice place here with him.

This was before the Countess came. Once she was there, everything was rather different. For weeks before her arrival people started talking about her: she was an important figure there, and no wonder since she was very rich and did a lot for the ashram and for Master when he went abroad on his lecture tours. I wondered what she was like. When I asked Vishwa about her, he said, "She is a great spiritual lady."

We were both sitting outside my room. There was a little open space round which several other rooms were grouped. One of these—the biggest, at the corner—was being got ready for the Countess. It was the one that was always kept for her. People were vigorously sweeping in there and scrubbing the floor with soap and water.

"She is rich and from very aristocratic family", Vishwa said, "but when she met Master she was ready to give up everything." He pointed to the room which was being scrubbed: "This is where she stays. And see—not even a bed—she sleeps on the floor like a holy person. Oh Katie, when someone like me gives up the world, what is there? It is not such a great thing. But when *she* does it—" His face glowed. He had very bright eyes and a lovely complexion. He always looked very pure, owing no doubt to the very pure life he led.

OF COURSE I got more and more curious about her, but when she came I was disappointed. I had expected her to be very special, but the only special thing about her was that I should meet her *here*. Otherwise she was a type I had often come across at posh parties and in the salons where I used to model. And the way she walked towards me and said "Welcome!"—she might as well have been walking across a carpet in a salon. She had a full-blown, middle-aged figure (she must have been in her fifties) but very thin legs on which she took long strides with her toes turned out. She gave me a deep searching look—and that too I was used to from someone like her because very worldly people always do that: to find out who you are and how usable. But in her case now I suppose it was to search down into my soul and see what that was like.

I don't know what her conclusion was, but I must have passed because she was always kind to me and even asked for my company quite often. Perhaps this was partly because we lived across from each other and she suffered from insomnia and needed someone to talk to at night. I'm a sound sleeper myself and wasn't always very keen when she came to wake me. But she would nag me till I got up. "Come on, Katie, be a sport", she

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would say. She used many English expressions like that: she spoke English very fluently though with a funny accent. I heard her speak to the French and Italian and German people in the ashram very fluently in their languages too. I don't know what nationality she herself was—a sort of mixture I think—but of course people like her have been all over, not to mention their assorted governesses when young.

She always made me come in her room. She said mine was too *luxurious*, she didn't feel right in it as she had given up all that. Hers certainly wasn't luxurious. Like Vishwa had said, there wasn't a stick of furniture in it and she slept on the floor on a mat. As the electricity supply in the ashram was very fitful, we usually sat by candlelight. It was queer sitting like that with her on the floor with a stub of candle between us. I didn't have to do much talking as she did it all. She used her arms a lot, in sweeping gestures, and I can still see them weaving around there by candlelight as if she was doing a dance with them; and her eyes which were big and baby-blue were stretched wide open in wonder at everything she was telling me. Her life was like a fairy tale, she said. She gave me all the details though I can't recall them as I kept dropping off to sleep (naturally, at two in the morning). From time to time she'd stop and say sharply "Are you asleep, Katie?" and then she would poke me till I said no I wasn't. She told me how she first met Master at a lecture he had come to give in Paris. At the end of the lecture she went up to him—she said she had to elbow her way through a crowd of women all trying to get near him—and simply bowed down at his feet. No words spoken. There had been no need. It had been predestined.

SHE WAS ALSO very fond of Vishwa. It seemed all three of them—*i.e.* her, Master, and Vishwa—had been closely related to each other in several previous incarnations. I think they had been either her sons or her husbands or fathers, I can't remember which exactly but it was very close so it was no wonder she felt about them the way she did. She had big plans for Vishwa. He was to go abroad and be a spiritual leader. She and Master often talked about it, and it was fascinating listening to them, but there was one thing I couldn't understand and that was why did it have to be Vishwa and not Master who was to be a spiritual leader in the West? I'd have thought Master himself had terrific qualifications for it.

Once I asked them. We were sitting in Master's room and the two of them were talking about Vishwa's future. When I asked "What about Master?" she gave a dramatic laugh and pointed at him like she was accusing him: "Ask him! Why don't you ask him!"

He gave a guilty smile and shifted around a bit on his throne. I say throne—it really was that: he received everyone in this room so a sort of dais had been fixed up at one end and a deer skin spread on it for him to sit on; loving disciples had painted an arched back to the dais and decorated it with stars and symbols stuck on in silver paper (hideous!).

When she saw him smile like that, she really got exasperated. "If you knew, Katie," she said, "how I have argued with him, how I have fought, how I have begged and pleaded on my *knees*. But he is as stubborn as—as—"

"A mule", he kindly helped her out.

"Forgive me", she said (because you can't call your guru names, that just isn't done!); though next moment she had worked herself up again: "Do you know," she asked me, "how many people were waiting for him at the airport last time he went to New York? Do you know how many came to his lectures? That they had to be turned away from the *door* till we took a bigger hall! And not to speak of those who came to enrol for the special 3-week Meditation-via-Contemplation course."

"She is right", he said. "They are very kind to me."

"Kind! They want him—need him—are crazy with love and devotion—"

"It's all true", he said. "But the trouble is, you see, I'm a very, very lazy person." And as he said this, he gave a big yawn and stretched himself to prove how lazy he was: but he didn't look it—on the contrary, when he stretched like that, pushing out his big chest, he looked like he was humming with energy.

That evening he asked me to go for a stroll with him. We walked by the river which was very busy with people dipping in it for religious reasons. The temples were also busy—whenever we passed one, they seemed

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to be bursting in there with hymns, and cymbals, and little bells.

Master said: "It is true that everyone is very kind to me in the West. Oh they make a big fuss when I come. They have even made a song for me—it goes—wait, let me see—"

He stopped still and several people took the opportunity to come up to ask for his blessing. There were many other holy men walking about but somehow Master stood out. Some of the holy men also came up to be blessed by him.

"Yes it goes: *'He's here! Our Master-ji is here! Jai jai Master! Jai Jai He!'* They stand waiting for me at the airport, and when I come out of the customs they burst into song. They carry big banners and also have drums and flutes. What a noise they make! Some of them begin to dance there and then on the spot, they are so happy. And everyone stares and looks at me, all the respectable people at the airport, and they wonder 'Now who is this ruffian?' "

He had to stop again because a shop-keeper came running out of his stall to crouch at Master's feet. He was the grocer—everyone knew he used false weights—as well as the local moneylender and the biggest rogue in town, but when Master blessed him I could see tears come in his eyes, he felt so good.

"A car has been bought for my use", Master said when we walked on again. "Also a lease has been taken on a beautiful residence in New Hampshire. Now they wish to buy an aeroplane to enable me to fly from coast to coast." He sighed. "She is right to be angry with me. But what am I to do? I stand in the middle of Times Square or Piccadilly, London, and I look up and there are all the beautiful beautiful buildings stretching so high up into heaven: yes I look up at them but it is not them I see at all, Katie! Not them at all!"

He looked up and I with him, and I understood that what he saw in Times Square and Piccadilly was what we saw now—all those mountains growing higher and higher above the river, and some of them so high that you couldn't make out whether it was them with snow on top or the sky with clouds in it.

BEFORE THE COUNTESS'S arrival, everything had been very easy-going. We usually did our meditation, but if we happened to miss out, it never mattered too much. Also there was a lot of sitting around gossiping or trips to the bazaar for eats. But the Countess put us on a stricter régime. Now we all had a time-table to follow, and there were gongs and bells going off all day to remind us. This started at 5 a.m. when it was meditation time, followed by purificatory bathing time, and study time, and discussion time, and hymn time, and so on till lights-out time. Throughout the day disciples could be seen making their way up or down the mountain-side as they passed from one group activity to the other. If there was any delay in the schedule, the Countess got impatient and clapped her hands and chivvied people along. The way she herself clambered up and down the mountain was just simply amazing for someone her age. Sometimes she went right to the top of the ashram where there was a pink plaster pillar inscribed with Golden Rules for Golden Living (a sort of Indian Ten Commandments): from here she could look all round, survey her domain as it were. When she wanted to summon everyone, she climbed up there with a pair of cymbals and how she beat them together! Boom! Bang! She must have had military blood in her veins, probably German.

She had drawn up a very strict time-table for Vishwa to cover every aspect of his education. He had to learn all sorts of things; not only English and a bit of French and German, but also how to use a knife and fork and even how to address people by their proper titles in case ambassadors and big church people and such were drawn into the movement as was fully expected. Because I'd been a model, I was put in charge of his deportment. I was supposed to teach him how to walk and sit nicely. He had to come to my room for lessons in the afternoons, and it was quite fun though I really didn't know what to teach him. As far as I was concerned, he was more graceful than anyone I'd ever seen. I loved the way he sat on the floor with his legs tucked under him; he could sit like that without moving for hours and hours. Or he might lie full length on the floor with his head supported on one hand and his ascetic's robe falling in folds round him so that he looked like a piece of sculpture you might see in a museum. I forgot to say that the Countess had decided he

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wasn't to shave his hair any more like the other junior swamis but was to grow it and have long curls. It wasn't long yet but it was certainly curly and framed his face very prettily.

After the first few days we gave up having lessons and just talked and spent our time together. He sat on the rug and I on the bed. He told me the story of his life and I told him mine. But his was much better than mine. His father had been the station master at some very small junction, and the family lived in a little railway house near enough the tracks to run and put the signals up or down as required. Vishwa had plenty of brothers and sisters to play with, and friends at the little school he went to at the other end of town; but quite often he felt like not being with anyone. He would set off to school with his copies and pencils like everyone else, but half way he would change his mind and take another turning that led out of town into some open fields. Here he would lie down under a tree and look at patches of sky through the leaves of the tree, and the leaves moving ever so gently if there was a breeze or some birds shook their wings in there. He would stay all day and in the evening go home and not tell anyone. His mother was a religious person who regularly visited the temple and sometimes he went with her but he never felt anything special. Then Master came to town and gave a lecture in a tent that was put up for him on the Parade Ground. Vishwa went with his mother to hear him, again not expecting anything special, but the moment he saw Master something very peculiar happened: he couldn't quite describe it, but he said it was like when there is a wedding on a dark night and the fireworks start and there are those that shoot up into the sky and then burst into a huge white fountain of light scattering sparks all over so that you are blinded and dazzled with it. It was like that, Vishwa said. Then he just went away with Master. His family were sad at first to lose him, but they were proud too like all families are when one of them renounces the world to become a holy man.

THOSE WERE GOOD AFTERNOONS we had, and we usually took the precaution of locking the door so no one could interrupt us. If we heard the Countess coming—one good thing about her, you could always *hear* her a mile off, she never moved an inch without shouting instructions to someone—the moment we heard her we'd jump up and unlock the door and fling it wide open: so when she looked in, she could see us having our lesson—Vishwa walking up and down with a book on his head, or sitting like on a dais to give a lecture and me showing him what to do with his hands.

When I told him the story of *my* life, we both cried. Especially when I told him about my first marriage when I was only 16 and Danny just 20. He was bass player in a group and he was really good and would have got somewhere if he hadn't freaked out. It was terrible seeing him do that, and the way he treated me after those first six months we had together which were out of this world. I never had anything like that with anyone ever again, though I got involved with many people afterwards. Everything just got worse and worse till I reached an all-time low with my second marriage which was to a company director (so-called, though don't ask me what sort of company) and a very smooth operator indeed besides being a sadist. Vishwa couldn't stand it when I came to that part of my story. He begged me not to go on, he put his hands over his ears. We weren't in my room that time but on top of the ashram by the Pillar of the Golden Rules. The view from here was fantastic, and it was so high up that you felt you might as well be in heaven, especially at this hour of the evening when the sky was turning all sorts of colours though mostly gold from the sun setting in it. Everything I was telling Vishwa seemed very far away. I can't say it was as if it had never happened, but it seemed like it had happened in someone else's life. There were tears on Vishwa's lashes, and I couldn't help myself, I had to kiss them away. After which we kissed properly. His mouth was as soft as a flower and his breath as sweet; of course he had never tasted meat nor eaten anything except the purest food such as a lamb might eat.

The door of my room was not the only one that was locked during those hot afternoons. Quite a few of the foreign disciples locked theirs for purposes I never cared to enquire into. At first I used to pretend to myself

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they were sleeping, and afterwards I didn't care what they were doing. I mean, even if they weren't sleeping I felt there was something just as good and innocent about what they actually *were* doing. And after a while—when we had told each other the story of our respective lives and had run out of conversation—Vishwa and I began to do it too. This was about the time when preparations were going on for his final Renunciation and Initiation ceremony. It's considered the most important day in the life of a junior swami, when he ceases to be junior and becomes a senior or proper swami. It's a very solemn ceremony. A funeral pyre is lit and his junior robe and his caste thread are burned on it. All this is symbolic—it means he's dead to the world but resurrected to the spiritual life. In Vishwa's case, his resurrection was a bit different from the usual. He wasn't fitted out in the standard senior swami outfit—which is a piece of orange cloth and a begging bowl—but instead the Countess dressed him up in the clothes he was to wear in the West. She had herself designed a white silk robe for him, together with accessories like beads, sandals, the deer skin he was to sit on, and an embroidered shawl.

Getting all this ready meant many trips to the bazaar, and often she made Vishwa and me go with her. She swept through the bazaar the same way she did through the ashram, and the shopkeepers leaned eagerly out of their stalls to offer their salaams which she returned or not as they happened to be standing in her books. She was pretty strict with all of them—but most of all with the tailor whose job it was to stitch Vishwa's new silk robes. We spent hours in his little shop while Vishwa had to stand there and be fitted. The tailor crouched at his feet, stitching and restitching the hem to the Countess's instructions. She and I would stand back and look at Vishwa with our heads to one side while the tailor waited anxiously for her verdict. Ten to one she would say "No! Again!"

But once she said not to the tailor but to me "Vishwa stands very well now. He has a good pose."

"Not bad", I said, continuing to look critically at Vishwa and in such a way that he had a job not to laugh.

What she said next however killed all desire for laughter: "I think we could end the deportment lessons now", and then she shouted at the tailor: "What is this! What are you doing! What sort of monkey-work do you call that!"

I managed to persuade her that I hadn't finished with Vishwa yet and there were still a few tricks of the trade I had to teach him. But I knew it was a short reprieve and that soon our lessons would have to end. Also plans were now afoot for Vishwa's departure. He was to go with the Countess when she returned to Europe in a few weeks time; and she was already very busy corresponding with her contacts in various places, and all sorts of lectures and meetings were being arranged. But that wasn't the only thing worrying me: what was even worse was the change I felt taking place in Vishwa himself, especially after his Renunciation and Initiation ceremony. I think he was getting quite impressed with himself.

The Countess made a point of treating him as if he was a guru already, and she bowed to him the same way she did to Master. And of course whatever she did everyone else followed suit, specially the foreign disciples. I might just say that they're always keen on things like that—I mean, bowing down and touching feet—I don't know what kick they get out of it but they do, the Countess along with the rest. Most of them do it very clumsily—not like Indians who are *born* to it—so sometimes you feel like laughing when you look at them. But they're always very solemn about it and afterwards, when they stumble up again, there's a sort of holy glow on their faces. Vishwa looked down at them with a benign expression and he also got into the habit of blessing them the way Master did.

NOW I STAYED ALONE in the afternoons, feeling very miserable, specially when I thought of what was going on in some of the other rooms and how happy people were in there. After a few days of this I couldn't stand being on my own and started wandering around looking for company. But the only person up and doing at that time of day was the Countess who I didn't particularly want to be with. So I went and sat in Master's room where the door was always open in case any of us needed him any time. Like

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everybody else he was often asleep that time of afternoon but it didn't matter. Just being in his presence was good. I sat on one of the green plastic benches that were ranged round his room and looked at him sleeping which he did sitting upright on his throne. Quite suddenly he would open his eyes and look straight at me and say "Ah Katie" as if he'd known all along that I was sitting there.

One day there was an awful commotion outside. Master woke up as the Countess came in with two foreign disciples, a boy and a girl, who stood hanging their heads while she told us what she had caught them doing. They were two very young disciples; I think the boy didn't even have to shave yet. One couldn't imagine them doing anything really evil, and Master didn't seem to think so. He just told them to go away and have their afternoon rest. But because the Countess was very upset he tried to comfort her which he did by telling about his early life in the world when he was a married man. It had been an arranged marriage of course, and his wife had been very young, just out of school. Being married for them had been like a game, specially the cooking and housekeeping part which she had enjoyed very much. Every Sunday she had dressed up in a spangled sari and high-heeled shoes and he had escorted her on the bus to the cinema where they stood in a queue for the one-rupee seats. He had loved her more than he had ever loved anyone or anything in all his life and had not thought it possible to love so much. But it only lasted two years at the end of which time she died of a miscarriage. He left his home then and wandered about for many years, doing all sorts of different jobs. He worked as a motor mechanic, and a salesman for medical supplies, and had even been in films for a while on the distribution side. But not finding rest anywhere, he finally decided to give up the world. He explained to us that it had been the only logical thing to do. Having learned during his two years of marriage how happy it was possible for a human being to be, he was never again satisfied to settle for anything less; but also seeing how it couldn't last on a worldly plane, he had decided to look for it elsewhere and help other people to do so with him.

I liked what he said, but I don't think the Countess took much of it in. She was more in her own thoughts. She was silent and gloomy which was *very* unusual for her. When she woke me that night for her midnight confessions, she seemed quite a different person: and now she didn't talk about her fairy-tale life or her wonderful plans for the future but on the contrary about all the terrible things she had suffered in the past. She went right back to the time she was in her teens and had eloped with and married an old man, a friend of her father's, and from there on it was all just one long terrible story of bad marriages and unhappy love affairs and other sufferings that I wished I didn't have to listen to. But I couldn't leave her in the state she was in. She was crying and sobbing and lying face down on the ground. It was eerie in that bare cell of hers with the one piece of candle flickering in the wind which was very strong, and the rain beating down like fists on the tin roof.

The monsoon had started, and when you looked up now, there weren't any mountains left, only clouds hanging down very heavily; and when you looked down, the river was also heavy and full. Every day there were stories of pilgrims drowning in it, and one night it washed over one bank and swept away a little colony of huts that the lepers had built for themselves. Now they no longer sat sunning themselves on the bridge but were carted away to the infectious diseases hospital. The rains came gushing down the mountain right into the ashram so that we were all wading ankle-deep in mud and water. Many rooms were flooded and their occupants had to move into other people's rooms resulting in personality clashes. Everyone bore grudges and took sides so that it became rather like the other ashrams I had visited and not liked.

THE PERSON WHO changed the most was the Countess. Although she was still dashing up and down the mountain, it was no longer to get the place in running order. Now she tucked up her skirts to wade from room to room to peer through chinks and see what people were up to. She didn't trust anyone but appointed herself as a one-man spying organisation. She even suspected Master and me! At least me—she asked me what I went to his room for in the afternoon and sniffed at my reply in a way I didn't care for. After

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that one awful outburst she had, she didn't call me at night any more but she was certainly after me during the day.

SHE GUARDED Vishwa like a dragon. She wouldn't even let me pass his room, and if she saw me going anywhere in that direction, she'd come running to tell me to take the other way round. I wasn't invited any more to accompany them to the bazaar but only she and Vishwa set off, with her holding a big black umbrella over them both. If they happened to pass me on the way, she would tilt the umbrella so he wouldn't be able to see me. Not that this was necessary as he never seemed to see me anyway. His eyes were always lowered and the expression on his face very serious. He had stopped joking around with the junior swamis, which I suppose was only fitting now he was a senior swami as well as about to become a spiritual leader. The Countess had fixed up a throne for him at the end of Master's room so he wouldn't have to sit on the floor and the benches along with the rest of us. When we all got together in there, Master would be at one end on his throne and Vishwa at the other on his. At Master's end there was always lots going on—everyone laughing and Master making jokes and having his fun—but Vishwa just sat very straight in the lotus pose and never looked at anyone or spoke, and only when the Countess pushed people to go and touch his feet, he'd raise a hand to bless them.

With the rains came flies and mosquitoes, and people began to fall sick with all sorts of mysterious fevers. The Countess—who was terrified of germs and had had herself pumped full of every kind of injection before coming to India—was now in a great hurry to be off with Vishwa. But before they could leave, he too came down with one of those fevers. She took him at once into her own room and kept him isolated in there with everything shut tight. She wouldn't let any of us near him. But I peeped in through the chinks, not caring whether she saw me or not. I even pleaded with her to let me come in, and once she let me but only to look at him from the door while she stood guard by his pillow. His eyes were shut and he was breathing heavily and moaning in an awful way. The Countess said I could go now, but instead I rushed up to Vishwa's bed. She tried to get between us but I pushed her out of the way and got down by the bed and held him where he lay moaning with his eyes shut. The Countess shrieked and pulled at me to get me away. I was shrieking too. We must have sounded and looked like a couple of madwomen. Vishwa opened his eyes and when he saw me there and moreover found that he was in my arms, *he* began to shriek too, as if he was frightened of me and that perhaps I was the very person he was having those terrible fever dreams about that made him groan.

It may have been this accidental shock treatment but that night Vishwa's fever came down and he began to get better. Master announced that there was going to be a Yagna or prayer-meet to give thanks for Vishwa's recovery. It was to be a really big show. Hordes of helpers came up from the town, all eager to take part in this event so as to benefit from the spiritual virtue it was expected to generate. The Meditation Hall was repainted salmon pink and the huge holy *OM* sign at one end of it was lit up all round with coloured bulbs that flashed on and off. Everyone worked with a will, and apparently good was already beginning to be generated because the rains stopped, the mud lanes in the ashram dried up, and the river flowed back into its banks. The disciples stopped quarrelling which may have been partly due to the fact that everyone could move back into their own rooms.

The Countess and Vishwa kept going down into the town to finish off with the tailors and embroiderers. They also went to the printers who were making large posters to be sent abroad to advertise Vishwa's arrival. The Countess often asked me to go with them: she was really a good-natured person and did not want me to feel left out. Especially now that she was sure there wasn't any dangerous situation working up between me and Vishwa. There she was right. I wasn't in the least interested in him and felt that the less I saw of him the better. I couldn't forget the way he had shrieked that night in the Countess's room as if I was something impure and dreadful. But on the contrary to me it seemed that it had been *he* who was impure and dreadful with his fever dreams. I didn't even like to think what went on in them.

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THE GREAT YAGNA began and it really was great. The Meditation Hall was packed and was terribly hot not only with all the people there but also because of the sacrificial flames that sizzled as more and more clarified butter was poured on them amid incantations. Everyone was smiling and singing and sweating. Master was terrific—he was right by the fire stark naked except for the tiniest bit of loincloth. His chest glistened with oil and seemed to reflect the flames leaping about. Sometimes he jumped up on his throne and waved his arms to make everyone join in louder; and when they did, he got so happy he did a little jig standing up there. Vishwa was on the other side of the Hall also on a throne. He was half reclining in his spotless white robe; he did not seem to feel the heat at all but lay there as if made out of cool marble. He reminded me of the god Shiva resting on top of his snowy mountain. The Countess sat near him, and I saw how she tried to talk to him once or twice but he took no notice of her. After a while she got up and went out which was not surprising for it really was not her scene, all that noise and singing and the neon lights and decorations.

It went on all night. No one seemed to get tired—they just got more and more worked up and the singing got louder and the fire hotter. Other people too began to do little jigs like Master's. I left the Hall and walked around by myself. It was a fantastic night, the sky sprinkled all over with stars and a moon like a melon. When I passed the Countess's door, she called me in. She was lying on her mat on the floor and said she had a migraine. No wonder, with all that noise. I liked it myself but I knew that though she was very much attracted to Eastern religions, her taste in music was more for the Western classical type (she loved string quartets and had had a long *affaire* with a cellist). She confessed to me that she was very anxious to leave now and get Vishwa started on his career. I think she would have liked to confess more things, but I had to get on. I made my way uphill past all the different buildings till I had reached the top of the ashram and the Pillar of the Golden Rules. Here I stood and looked down.

I saw the doors of the Meditation Hall open and Master and Vishwa come out. They were lit up by the lights from the Hall. Master was big and black and naked except for his triangle of orange cloth, and Vishwa was shining in white. I saw Master raise his arm and point it up, up to the top of the ashram. The two of them reminded me of a painting I've seen of I think it was an angel pointing out a path to a pilgrim. And like a pilgrim Vishwa began to climb up the path that Master had shown him. I stood by the Pillar of the Golden Rules and waited for him. When he got to me, we didn't have to speak one word. He was like a charged dynamo; I'd never known him like that. It was more like it might have been with Master instead of Vishwa. The drums and hymns down in the Meditation Hall also reached their crescendo just then. Of course Vishwa was too taken up with what he was doing to notice anything going on round him, so it was only me that saw the Countess come uphill. She was walking quite slowly and I suppose I could have warned Vishwa in time but it seemed a pity to interrupt him, so I just let her come on up and find us.

MASTER FINALLY SETTLED everything to everyone's satisfaction. He said Vishwa and I were to be a couple, and whereas Vishwa was to be the Guru, I was to embody the Mother principle (which is also very important). Once she caught on to the idea, the Countess rather liked it. She designed an outfit for me too—a sort of flowing white silk robe, really quite becoming. You might have seen posters of Vishwa and me together, both of us in these white robes, his hair black and curly, mine blonde and straight. I suppose we do make a good couple—anyway, people seem to like us and to get something out of us. We do our best. It's not very hard; mostly we just have to sit there and radiate. The results are quite satisfactory—I mean the effect we seem to have on people who need it. The person who really has to work hard is the Countess because she has to look after all the business and organisational end. We have a strenuous tour programme. Sometimes it's like being on a one-night stand and doing your turn and then packing up in a hurry to get to the next one. Some of the places we stay in aren't too good—motels where you have to pay in advance in case you flit—and when she is

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very tired, the Countess wrings her hands and says "My God, what am I doing here?" It must be strange for her who's been used to all the grand hotels everywhere, but of course really she likes it. It's her life's fulfilment. But for Vishwa and me it's just a job we do, and all the time we want to be somewhere else and are thinking of that other place. I often remember what Master told me, what happened to him when he looked up in Times Square and Piccadilly, and it's beginning to happen to me too. I seem to *see* those mountains and the river and temples; and then I long to be there.

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Gertrude Stein at Snail's Bay

I am Miss Stein
and this bay is mine

I am Miss Stein (pronounced Steen)
and this sea is green

Americans do not like European
pronunciation

I live in Europe because Americans
do not like Europeans

I do not live in America
because Europeans do not like Americans

I am in Australia because
I hear you have an opera
and I am searching for snails

I am not here to buy you paintings

I am in Snail's Bay to find snails

Although there are no snails in Snail's Bay
there are buses behind me
and children in front of me
and sea in front of the children

They tell me this is Arbor Day
No, I do not drop my aitches

Nothing can be done in the face
of ordinary unhappiness

Above all there is nothing to do in words

I have written a dozen books
to prove nothing can be done in words

A great artist may fall off an inner alp
but I will not roll down this gentle bank

I would not give a cook book for his alp

I have a message for the snails
of New South Wales

You will never know
which of you is Shakespeare

Yes, I am a disagreeable old woman
who talks selfishly and strangely
and writes down words in a peculiar order

It is to prevent unhappiness escaping
and poisoning the world

How do you define
the truth, Miss Stein?

A snail has not the right to say
it will or won't: it must obey

With the buses and the children and the sea
I have nothing to do

I am an observer,
I observe the blue and you

I see an immense rain
washing pebbles up the beach
and evacuating misery

The plane for America is a sort of star

The world will not last,
I must warn the snails

Peter Porter

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Michael Wharton

The Dutt-Paukers

SOONER OR LATER, if time allows, somebody will write a massive, fully researched, annotated and indexed social study of the background, lives, opinions and influence of the remarkable group who are sometimes called "Hampstead thinkers." They are the mainly well-to-do and middle-class people of this country, men, women and even children, who have accepted the whole corpus of orthodox Left-wing views and, unmoved by argument or by events in the outer world, have gone on holding them so long and so tenaciously that they are simply incapable by this time of believing that there are any other views which can be held—except by the very stupid or the very wicked.

The period when these people flowered—if that is the right word—most luxuriantly in Great Britain was, roughly, the third quarter of the 20th century. Ironically it is at the very moment when the measureless consummation they have dreamed of so long and of which they have talked so tirelessly and at so little risk to themselves has suddenly become a real possibility that the Hampstead thinkers, along with their invested incomes, have begun to show signs of wilting a little. Is it possible that if and when the thing they have worked for actually comes to pass, they may find they do not like it after all? What a monstrous, fascist, racialist, neo-colonialist suggestion!

A definitive study of the phenomenon of the Hampstead thinkers (unfortunately some Frenchman, Bandeau or Blondin or somebody, many years ago appropriated the most suitable title for such a book I can think of) remains to be written. Perhaps (for various reasons, some of them very unpleasant) it never *will* be written. For the present a few notes drawn from contemporary sources on a typical example of the species—the Dutt-Pauker family—will have to do.

THE BEST-KNOWN MEMBER of the family, Mrs Dutt-Pauker herself, though she bears the equivocal forename Myrtle, is of decidedly upper-middle, even upper-class origin. Though she does not like to talk about it, she comes of an old Midland family, the Mauntleroys, under whose lands coal was discovered in the early 19th century and from whom she inherited considerable wealth, as well as certain unseizable qualities of superiority, authority, and even snobbery. Thus, however she may denounce the moral turpitude of the White Rhodesians in public, some malicious people—fascists, of course—have even suggested that it is really not so much their "racist" attitudes she finds objectionable as their habit of saying "Pardon" and referring to "afternoon tea" and "serviettes."

Mrs Dutt-Pauker embraced her Left-wing views (or, as she would say, became totally committed to the cause of social justice) when she was quite a young girl. She has never deviated from them, and since in this country progressive opinions are (to say the least) no bar to financial advance, the considerable wealth she started with is even more considerable now. As well as Marxmount, a beautiful white-walled Regency mansion whose gardens abut on the very best edge of Hampstead Heath itself, she owns a small manor house in Dorset, renamed (for sentimental reasons) Beria Garth; a country house in Wales, Glynstalin; and another in County Kerry, Leninmore, to which she moved during the "Cuba Crisis" of 1962 as a protest against fascist aggression.

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YOUNG MYRTLE was only 19 when the Spanish Civil War broke out. While doing welfare work in Barcelona she met and married her first husband, Giles Trehaddock, a shadowy Old Etonian and anarcho-syndicalist poet who had to be accidentally liquidated for political reasons in 1937 ("No, we never talk about poor Giles now"). It was then that Myrtle met Walther Ulbricht, who was working in Catalonia at the time. As a writer in *True Leftist Love Stories* put it: "Love, fuelled to passion by a common interest in terrorism and re-education camps, bloomed and burgeoned under the velvet-starred night-skies of Spain. . . ."

Circumstances and the stern demands of the Cause tore the pair apart, but they remained good friends. Every May Day Walther used to send her a picture-postcard of the Berlin Wall, and when he retired as East German leader Mrs Dutt-Pauker, herself, in her own words, "a typical British wife and mother with no political axe to grind", sent him a warm message "on behalf of the women of Britain." But "the lover of her life", according to an excited newspaper interview of 1965, "was her second husband, bespectacled, four-foot-ten Ernst Dutt-Pauker, a typical swashbuckling Highlander, stalwart of the Siege of Madrid, hero of a thousand purges, friend of Bela Kun, Yagoda, Beria, Novotny and Gerö, and at one time motoring correspondent of the *Daily Worker*." Ernst died at an advanced age in 1960, but according to an article in *Leftwing Homes and Gardens*, "his study at Marxmount is still kept just as he left it: on his desk a half-completed plan for a people's labour-camp on Exmoor lies next to the stuffed head of Marshal Tukhachevsky and a silver-mounted upper set of Beria's false teeth."

MRS DUTT-PAUKER had no children by Ernst, but she has a daughter, Deirdre, who, as many have remarked, bears a slight but unmistakable resemblance to Ulbricht himself. Born just before the start of the Second World War, Deirdre, though of a less forceful temperament than her mother, soon became quite as totally committed, and was publicly shouting "*Open the Second Front!*" from her push-chair almost as soon as she could talk. She was barely 18 when with the help of her friend Ted Bloke, the progressive poet, she started a Left-wing folk-song factory in a shed at the bottom of the garden at Marxmount. "She is particularly proud", wrote a gossip columnist of the 1950s,

> "of a brand-new 18th-century Black Country folk song, *Down the Plughole with the Tories*, which, says attractive, leggy, army Deirdre, 'strikes the keynote of working-class protest.' Turned out in under three minutes by modern machinery, this promises to be a real winner at Left-wing rallies and CND demos. The Music Division of Rentacrowd, the giant mob-supplying agency, is deeply interested in the heritage of English song."

FOR THE LAST 25 YEARS, with the help of her daughter, Mrs Dutt-Pauker has devoted her energies tirelessly to Left-wing causes. A small pamphlet would be needed to list all the progressive organisations she has worked for, often as chairman, from Housewives for Peace and the Anglo-North-North-East-Roumelian-People's Republic-Friendship Society to the Democratic Windowcleaners' Front. In the dark days of 1956, when (as she wrote) the gallant men of the Red Army were "battling, often against odds, with heavily-armed bankers, landlords, capitalists, clerical fascists and even a few misguided people in Hungary", she opened a fund to send them comforts—socks, warm underwear, Marxist chessboards—as a token that the wartime friendship of Britain and Soviet Russia was "still alive among the ordinary, decent people of this country."

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During the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya she wrote to the papers, denouncing the disgraceful conditions in detention camps and the savage persecution of Mau Mau prisoners, who,

> "mostly detained for minor offences against parking or licensing regulations, are being illegally deprived of their copies of the *New Statesman, Tribune,* the *Canterbury Deanery Gazette* and the other periodicals they look forward to so keenly. I have received hundreds of heart-breaking letters from these unfortunates, protesting, often in identical words, against this shocking treatment. May I urge those who share my horror to keep up the good work of deluging the Kenya detention camps with progressive literature? Some of it is bound to get through to the victims of fascist tyranny, who, when the day of freedom dawns, will, I am sure, know how to show their gratitude in their own uninhibited way. . . . "

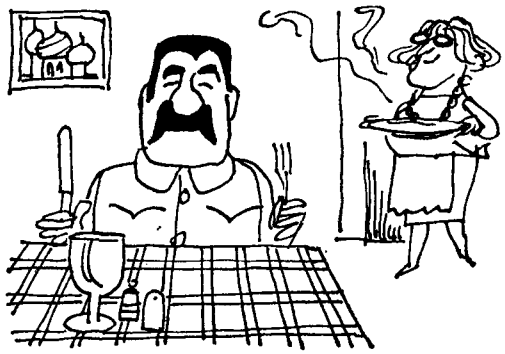
Apart from her other multitudinous activities she has long been in great demand as a broadcaster. She has often appeared on the GPI Television Network's popular discussion programme, "Hear All Sides", which started in 1963. A critic wrote of the first of the series:

> " 'Hear All Sides' got off to a good start yesterday evening with a lively free-for-all on Berlin, Nuclear Tests and the Cold War. Taking part in a well-balanced programme were Eric Lard, the avant-garde playwright; Mrs Dutt-Pauker, the Hampstead liberal thinker; Sir Osric Fenton, the progressive actor-manager; Dr Abdul Castrumba, the free-lance revolutionary leader; and Mr J. L. Smith, an elderly retired newsagent from Nerdley. I thought Mr Smith, who suggested that we ought to stand by our allies and not give in to all Communist demands, got very much the worst of the argument, partly owing to a speech impediment and a recent course of electrical shock-treatment. The chairman, Sir William Goth-Jones, Vice-Chancellor of Stretchford University, had to intervene when Sir Osric called Mr Smith a 'common little horror', while Lard spat on him, shouting 'Rat! Slimy pillar of the Establishment!' and Dr Castrumba pulled out his sub-machine-gun. There was general agreement when Mrs Dutt-Pauker said that as a typical British housewife she would welcome the Red Army to our shores after the liquidation of the reactionary forces. Immediately after the programme, a GPI spokesman stated, their switchboard was jammed with angry calls from progressive people who had evidently misunderstood their orders and were protesting against the wrong programme."

MRS DUTT-PAUKER is also a prolific author. As well as her autobiography, *Leftwards Ever* and many other works she has even written a book on *Left-wing Cookery*, published in 1964. A reviewer wrote:

> "This book fulfils a long-felt want. Now that so many ingredients such as South African fruit-juice, Spanish onions and, since the rise of Gen. de Gaulle, all the products of France, are very properly boycotted by Left-wing cooks, many a household now subsists almost entirely on tinned mashed potatoes. Mrs Dutt-Pauker, who once had the privilege (at the late Mr Beria's playful suggestion) of cooking a toadstool omelette for the late Marshal Stalin, gives dozens of delicious recipes made up entirely of progressive ingredients. One of the best is East German People's Pudding, a kind of hardboiled doughnut with a subtly metallic flavour—a favourite dish of Herr Ulbricht. Democratic kiddies will love it."

Always welcome in the people's democracies, Mrs Dutt-Pauker went to East Berlin in 1964 to take part in the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the Democratic Republic. A gossip-writer asked her about the reported mass-escape of refugees over and sometimes even under the Wall to West Berlin. "Mrs Dutt-Pauker smiled. 'There are always neurotics and misfits everywhere', she told me. 'We all know the kind of people who, though they long for affection, will reject it when it is offered; people who, though they would like to be popular at parties, shrink into a corner when anyone speaks to them. I imagine that with the atmosphere of festivity and jollity in East Germany at the moment, the happy, smiling faces everywhere, it was all too much for these poor people, and they felt they just had to run away.' "



MRS DUTT-PAUKER is as hospitable as she is generous and understanding, and her Hampstead house is always open to the poor and oppressed. Not long ago, for instance, on returning from a meeting of "*Squatters for Peace and Higher Living*

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Standards", she found a party of poor people actually squatting in Marxmount itself. A moment's interrogation showed that they were social fascists, and she immediately sent for the police. But she makes a practice, every Christmas, although herself a scientific humanist, of having a Commonwealth student to stay during the holiday. One year London County Council (the LCC as it then was) undertook to provide one from Zambia. But when the student turned up at Marxmount he turned out to be white! Deirdre, who was knitting some woollen bomb-covers for Viet Cong saboteurs, fainted on the spot. Her mother sent the young colonialist packing and within seconds was angrily telephoning the LCC for a replacement. But only Indians were still available. "I am prepared to believe that a genuine mistake was made and that there was nothing more sinister behind the incident", she said later. "But we know that the vile canker of racialism can lurk even in the most unlikely quarters. At any rate the incident has made me more than ever determined to intensify my fight against racialism by all possible means."

A VERY IMPORTANT EVENT in the Dutt-Pauker ménage was Deirdre's marriage in 1964. A gossip-writer "talked to Deirdre and her fiancé, bearded, secularist, protest-conscious TV-producer John Armature. 'We met in Trafalgar Square, at a demo against Swiss fascism', he told me. 'Deirdre, of course, holds the record for picketing the South African Embassy—289 hours', he added fondly. The wedding is next month—register office and a brief humanist ceremony in Hampstead. Plans? The lovers laughed. 'We're going to forget about politics for a while', John said happily. 'We shall spend our honeymoon in King Street and East Berlin, where we hope to have discussions on democratic trends in mural design and progressive jurisprudence. Then it's back to work for us both. We're going to make our marriage one big Protest, aren't we, darling? . . .'"

An even more important event in the family occurred about a year later. As the same columnist wrote:

> "Mrs Dutt-Pauker, the Hampstead thinker, became a grandmother yesterday when her daughter Deirdre gave birth to a son at St Zinoviev's Anti-Colonialist Nursing Home at Highgate. The lusty 13lb 8oz boy will be called Bert Brecht Mao Che Odinga, and has already been entered for a primary school in Holland Park, Eton, and Stretchford University. The entire birth was televised on closed circuit and was watched by Deirdre's mother and husband and by a large invited audience which included top playwright Eric Lard; Belgian teratologist Dr Max Laryncx; writer and TV personality Doreen Gaggs, who is to write a series of articles in *Handbag* magazine; psychologist and erotician Dr Heinz Kiosk and avant-garde self-publicist Neville Dreadberg. A highlight of the show was the age-old but ever-thrilling moment of the baby's first cry as he emerged into the world: '*Blockade South Africa—Now!*'. . . "

It was not long before Bert, who was born (a curiosity of medical history) with a full beard, dark glasses, and a placard reading "*Yanks Out!*" began to show unusual powers. When Mrs Dutt-Pauker, taking time off from picketing the Portuguese Embassy, called in to admire her grandson and handed him some toy leaflets about West German revanchism, Bert snatched her ball-point pen and began drafting letter after letter to *Tribune* on various progressive topics with a speed that had the grown-ups dizzy and gasping with admiration. "At this rate", said Deirdre, "he'll be able to go on next year's Great Easter Peace March to Aldermaston all by himself!"

BUT SOON BERT BEGAN to give unwelcome signs of independence, opening up ideological rifts in the Dutt-Pauker family and even exposing what he himself called "inherent contradictions." There was an ugly scene one afternoon when Deirdre, who lives in a smaller, pleasant house near Marxmount with her husband and Gjoq, her Albanian *au-pair* girl, who has Maoist views, brought her little son to visit his grandmother. Suddenly Bert flung down the copy of *Noddy and the Young Socialists* he was reading and denounced Deirdre for revisionist thinking. In a four-hour speech, punctuated by "*applause*", "*thunderous applause*", "*ovation*" and "*standing ovation*", all sup-

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plied by himself, he accused his mother of being a tool of American imperialism, hand-in-glove with the slavering paranoiacs of the Pentagon.

His mother burst into tears, and even Mrs Dutt-Pauker herself, though gratified by these signs of rapid progress, was nonplussed for a moment. But drawing on a lifetime's experience of progressive politics, she was soon able to confuse the issue by pointing out that Bert himself owned a rattle made in militarist, neo-Nazi West Germany. Bert retorted that it had obviously been the gift of a CIA *agent-provocateur*. Luckily Bert's father looked in at that moment, fresh from work on his new TV documentary on White Cannibalism in Rhodesia, and quarrels were forgotten (for the moment) as the whole family trooped off happily for an hour's picketing of the Spanish Embassy.

Perhaps with the idea of countering the Maoist Gjoq's ideological influence on young Bert, Deirdre sent him off at an early age to the well-known Lumumba Gardens Anti-Colonialist Nursery School in Hampstead, headed by stately Miss Estelle Maclean-Gropius, one of the few Leftist women thinkers said not to have been the mistress of the late H. G. Wells. But the move failed. Bert, who like many bearded Left-wing infantile thinkers (see Marx, *passim*) seems to have the unusual quality of remaining always the same age, became more of an activist than ever. Soon he had organised a National Union of Nursery School Students, with himself as president. His continual denunciations, during school hours as well as at home, of revisionism, adventurism, "green fascism", Nembutalovism, Khrushchevite polarisation and other heresies, and latterly his experimental work on explosive devices for the IRA Provisionals (with the expert advice of Gjoq) have done nothing to help matters.

HOWEVER, MRS DUTT-PAUKER, John and Deirdre, with a new ally in Mrs Dutt-Pauker's niece Pixie (who is senior lecturer in Social Protestology at the University of Stretchford) have continued to carry on the good work on more orthodox lines. At many a crowded meeting at the Beria Memorial Hall in Hampstead Mrs Dutt-Pauker may be heard, older now but vigorous as ever, denouncing all the evils of our "rotten, unjust, consumerised Western military-industrial complex" from the atrocities carried out by British troops in Ulster, fox-hunting, the public schools, private medicine, and tied cottages to the fiendish cunning of the South African Government in releasing the occasional political prisoner. (She claims, incidentally, to be able to detect South African foodstuffs without even looking at the labels on tins or the markings on fruit, merely by the mephitic aura which surrounds them.)

HERE IS A SUMMARY of a typical speech she made a few years ago when the then Tory Government had proposed some trifling increase in the strength of the armed forces:

"The Tory Government is emerging in its true colours. Behind the bland features of the Old Etonian can be glimpsed the ferocious snarl of the neo-Nazi warlord. The pretext for this disgraceful proposal, which if it is carried out will reduce hundreds of thousands of old-age pensioners, widows and small children to starvation, is the alleged threat from Soviet forces in Europe and the alleged increase in Soviet naval power in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Was there ever a more absurd and insulting suggestion? Everybody knows that the Soviet forces, if 'forces' they can be called, are a completely peaceful body of men. Unlike the troops of capitalist governments, their purpose is not to threaten other nations but to help and advise them. Obviously, the more there are of them the better for everybody. Instead of arming ourselves against an imaginary threat (and the real purpose of this, of course, is to increase the profits of arms manufacturers and their shareholders) we should make friends and collaborate with the Soviet forces. They would like nothing better than to make friends and collaborate with us. Like most reasonable British women, I look forward to the day when Soviet forces are stationed permanently in Britain. They could do a wonderful job in helping our welfare work, looking after old people, running 'meals-on-wheels' services, organising rehabilitation courses for delinquent Tories and so on. . . . " (*applause*).

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DEIRDRE, FOR HER PART, has begun to concentrate more and more on the expanding Race Relations industry, for which she puts in several hours a week training discrimination testers and combing public-library shelves for books containing racialist poison, from the Bible and Shakespeare to John Buchan and Dr Dolittle. She also edits *Humbug*, a "black-and-white multi-racial comic" designed to counter racial prejudice among the young. This is a comparatively sophisticated publication, inasmuch as not all the white characters are shown as stupid and evil nor all the black intelligent and good.

One educational strip, *Jim Ogbufe and His Pals*, shows how the blessings of civilisation were brought to a grateful Europe, then sunk in the barbarous Dark Ages, by a group of child explorers from the advanced cultures of Africa. Another, *All Together for Peace and Higher Living Standards*, shows children of all races united to bring about social change by sabotaging the present English educational system. There are also illustrated educational strips on careers. *Fred and Mary, the Activists*, for instance, shows how a politically integrated and socially aware black boy, Mary, and a white girl, Fred, make their first explosive device for classroom use—with side-splitting results for Miss Thatcher-Harris, the unpopular fascist, racialist and sexist headmistress.

AS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE, whether conscious or unconscious, of Hampstead thinking—that is, the complete collapse of our present society and a take-over, if not by the Red Army itself, then at least by elements not unsympathetic to it—becomes more and more of a possibility, it might be supposed that Hampstead thinkers themselves, as personified in Mrs Dutt-Pauker and her family, would grow more and more jubilant. This is not precisely so, as observation shows. A vague uneasiness, perhaps not unconnected with certain financial tendencies, can now be sensed. Yet it is as certain as anything can be that even at the very last, as the People's Militia arrive, with many a coarse and brutal jest, to commandeer Marxmount and lead away its châtelaine minus her jewels and Giacomettis (perhaps tipped off by young Bert, who will no doubt be shot or sent to a re-education camp himself not long afterwards), Mrs Dutt-Pauker will still be giving full voice to her views on South African oranges, the fiendish acts of the Chilean Junta, and the innocence of Alger Hiss.

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LETTER FROM BRUSSELS

The British in Europe

A Balance-Sheet—By JOHN BOSWORTH

WHAT ARE THE present aims and characteristics of the European Economic Community? What effect will confirmed and committed membership have on social and political developments in Britain, and how could—and should—Britain itself hope to influence the new European totality? Discussion of these questions may help open up some interesting historical perspectives for the remainder of this shifting and unhappy century.

Looking at the European Community at the beginning of 1976 we are aware of both a confirmation and an adaptation of the original vision of the founding fathers. Europe is still dedicated to ultimate propositions very much in tune with the declarations in the 1950s of the signatories to the Paris and Rome Treaties, but its development has necessarily responded to the slow groundswell of political and social comprehension. Europe came into being because of a profoundly creative act of its favourite cliché "the political will." But it survives and is likely to survive because its original idea and impetus have proved well able to take in their historical stride all the deviations and delays imposed by the realities of national politics.

Despite such difficulties the main characteristic of the Community today is its corporate strength. The salient statistics of GNP, population, share of world trade and growth of "domestic" trade are too well known to need repeating. The patent central fact is that even in its present apprentice form the EEC is accepted by the United States, Japan, and (after some hesitation) the Soviet States as a world power. The most significant implicit testimonial is undoubtedly the seriousness with which China entered into and conducted its recent discussions with Sir Christopher Soames, the Community's "Foreign Minister."

Similarly the Community has had a spectacular success in its negotiations with the Caribbean, African and Pacific developing countries over the last year or so. One of the most disturbed areas of international friction and incomprehension lies on the frontier between the developed and developing world. Although the EEC in its full form contains four historical colonising states—Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium—the trade agreements reached so far with the inherently suspicious, if not antagonistic, "Third World" have been based on bargaining conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and practical understanding happily remote from the political bickerings and sullen silences of the third UNCTAD. There seems every likelihood that when the fourth UNCTAD is held this year the Community will provide a fresh focus of confidence and balanced goodwill which has so far been sadly lacking in these wordy and acquisitive confrontations.

SO MUCH FOR the outside world. In its own opulent and extensive domain the key Community passwords are "democracy" and "capitalism". Democracy is inherent in the Treaties—not merely in their objectives but in their institutions. In these Treaties the industrial revolution is recognised at its full traumatic worth. The EEC is the world's prototype of an economic political democracy. Business enterprise, which has had to be assimilated by makeshifts and adaptations into most national political systems was from the outset specifically placed at the centre of the Community constitutions and philosophy. Article 2 of the Rome Treaty—the first substantive statement of Community mutual purpose—makes it crystal clear that

> The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continued and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of

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living and closer relations between the States belonging to it.

The language is perhaps more that of Articles of Association than of a Declaration of Rights; but the concept is after all pragmatic rather than prophetic.

This preference for economic practicalities reflects a most important feature of Community evolution. When a small group of European statesmen—led by Jean Monnet—first moved towards the ECSC and later to the EEC, they were driven by an almost revolutionary political conviction. They had lived through two brutal and bloody wars based on European rivalries. They knew that from Verdun to Hiroshima the central resources of war had shifted from military manpower to industrial productivity and technological competence. They sensed the economic muscles under the nationalistic skin. They were not content to guard against future wars; they had a profound and positive belief in the need to commit Europe to a demanding and creative peace.

Their passionate common purpose could not be diluted into abstractions nor reduced to mundane legal details. They had it and felt it, but could not negotiate upon it. The basis for international agreement between six governments had to be a much more prosaic and mundane formulation. So the lawyers were sent for and the Treaties were drafted.

The essential practical aims survive in the printed word, but the original European spirit has never been fully re-expanded. Monnet, Schuman, Spaak and Adenauer were unable after 1957 to rear the infant they conceived in 1950, and so the Community still suffers from some spiritual withdrawal symptoms. Europe as we know it now has had to evolve from the lawyers' interpretations and the politicians' manipulations of the draftsman's texts. It is as well that that text is practical rather than declamatory, and that Article 3 thrusts home Article 2 with a detailed "shopping list" of such detailed projects as the Customs Union, the common agricultural and transport policies, the rules of competition, and the external trade association.

THE PROSPECT FOR PROGRESS towards European union rests therefore on a synthesis of the specific practicabilities of Article 3 and associated provisions of the Rome Treaty, with such new and sporadic exercises of the political will as the Council of Ministers can bring themselves to tolerate. It is particularly important to note that in the practical implementation of Article 3—for example: in transport, agriculture, the Customs union, common commercial policy, and economic and social development—the influence and responsibility of commercial and industrial enterprises themselves must be considerable. The Treaty of Rome—following the Paris Treaty which focused solely on the two basic industries of Coal and Steel—clearly implies that while governments and the Community institutions may guide overall economic policy the horsepower of the European effort must be provided by the producers of goods (including agricultural output) and services.

Business activity, however, is subject to a realistic and sophisticated framework of "political" control and guidance and linked with the much-abused concept of "industrial democracy." The Treaty of Rome gives substantial powers to the European Commission; but it assumed the rapid election of a European Parliament, and was therefore somewhat sparing in its allocation of responsibilities to the Council of Ministers. The brutal intervention of General de Gaulle in Community affairs in 1965–66 and his somewhat equivocal view of the whole European concept from 1958 to 1967 (combined with the lesser strains of British applications for entry in 1961 and 1967–72 and our recent "re-negotiation") brought an unintended but undeniable extra emphasis to the bargaining role of the Council at the centre of Community politics. This was far from the original Monnet concept of an organic and integrated Community founding its own independent dynamic on a progressive synthesis of the partial surrenders of national sovereignty made to it by Member states in accordance with the requirements of the Treaties.

While the present balance, if not tension, between an ambitious but gun-shy Commission, an embryonic unrepresentative Assembly, and a cautious calculating Council, will sustain a rather anaemic Customs Union, a groaning Common Agricultural policy, and rag-bag of outline or apprentice common policies in other minor aspects of economic activity, it cannot take the strain of a resumed purposeful march towards economic and monetary union. Hence the importance of the recent Tindemans mission of enquiry into current opinion on the preferred shape and scope of European Union and the related speculations on constitutional reconstruction now animating many Community institutions.

MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, THE COMMUNITY has already made considerable progress with second-level administrative democracy. From the beginning the Economic and Social Committee (which includes "producers, farmers, carriers, workers, dealers, craftsmen, professional occupations and representatives of the general public") has played a practically important part in the

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formulation of substantive Community policy. The real triumph for democracy, however, has come from the prudent political common sense of the Commission who, conscious of their own limitations as well as responsibilities, have made extraordinary efforts to consult and convince a very wide range of "external" representative bodies on every major aspect of EEC policy. Not only have they maintained an intensive programme of formal discussions, but they have kept open many additional informal access points, and given weight to that consistently devalued word "consultation" by noting and acting on many of the proposals made to them. This has been a dispersed and unexciting activity; but it has been particularly interesting for British trade and other representative bodies, many of which have found broadening responsibilities in manning these new consultative frontiers.

The Community is also reinforcing practical democracy by a steadily developing consumer policy manifested not only in the Transport Advisory Committee (established by Article 83 of the Rome Treaty), but also in the more recent Consumer Consultative Committee and in such related bodies as the Customs Advisory Committee. The Commission's proposals for a central consumer programme approved by the Council in April this year go far beyond the housewife-oriented dealings of our own revamped Consumer Council and should do much by example as well as precept to raise the political and economic influence of the consumer interest in all member countries.

THE OVERALL PICTURE of practical democracy is something more than the sum of these rather prosaic parts. In the ordinary operation of Community affairs the actions and attitudes of responsible officials have been outstandingly democratic. Few of the distortions bandied about in the UK's referendum debate were more unnecessary and damaging than the innumerable references to an "officious bureaucracy." Compared with most national governments the Commission is a showpiece of practical democracy, realistically and sensitively adjusted to economic as well as political requirements.

It is this professional concern for democracy as a working principle rather than any abstract social zeal which explains the Commission's early and continuing pressure for some general move to what is now generally described as "Worker Participation." This reflects the Commission's corporate belief that business—particularly the large industrial undertaking—plays so important a part in individual and collective social life that it must follow the much older political precedent of a steady opening-up of access and responsibility to general public interest and influence.

IT IS A PITY that in going about their consultative business the Commission seem to have fallen into the fashionable fallacy of "social partnership." Widely dispersed painstaking discussion in every sector of the Commission's responsibilities is no doubt a great burden on officials. In the acutely contentious area of labour relations the main high road to accommodation and progress, if not peace and prosperity, must clearly lie to a very great extent through agreement between representative bodies of workers and employers. But in some countries (notably Britain) this rush for the quick way out—the "after-consultation-with-the-CBI-and TUC" syndrome—has already proved a long way round to eventual frustration. In Britain the trade unions represent less than 50% of employees—in France the figure is hardly 25%. The employers' bodies are probably even less representative; and neither unions nor management associations have any real control over their members.

Yet such statistics have not deterred either the Commission or most Community governments from according central union and management organisations the special status of "social partners" not only in the area of labour relations (where they may well be the best available consultative and negotiating devices) but over much wider areas of economic and social policy in which all the other sectors represented in the Economic and Social Committee and the Community consumer bodies have collectively a much larger and often more responsibly exercised interest. This is an area of community practice in which there is room for second and more imaginative thoughts.

While democracy, even with working imperfections, is still an internationally respectable objective, the Community's other principal attachment —to Capitalism—is less generally acceptable. Yet the necessary relationship between the two concepts has been pragmatically demonstrated. The most liberal and mature democracies in the world today are linked to the most developed applications of the market economy. The Treaties themselves do not explicitly assert this relationship, but the liberal abstractions of the preamble to the Rome Treaty, taken in conjunction with its subsequent specific provisions, pin the Community ideal and its future to progressive industrial and commercial expansion within a carefully nurtured framework of competition.

Of course the Commission apply certain limitations to the cruder forces of commercial competition; but these are designed to protect

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and pursue broad social policies rather than secure some special advantage for any Member state or particular business sector. Most of the Commission's attention, however, is directed to stimulating competition and opening up the Common Market to its operation, though there are the usual inconsistencies between policies on the one hand for "encouraging economies of scale" and on the other for "restricting mergers and monopolies."

On the whole, however, the Community is at least as capitalistic as the USA, and a good deal more systematic and advanced in its techniques for adjusting capitalism to changing social imperatives.

SOMETHING HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID about the application of democracy to business. There is also a keen Community interest in the protection of the environment, and here the international example and influence of the harmonisation of practice and standards among nine leading industrial countries, with all the authority and sanctions of Community legislation, is undeniable. These policies will gain greatly in scope and reality as Community regional policy develops.

The Commission can also congratulate themselves on the general direction of their social policy—or such parts of it as have so far received approval from the Council. The Commission have placed a sensible constructive emphasis on retraining, resettlement, and other aids to personal mobility. While many Member states—including Britain—seem inclined to subsidise industries, the Commission has shown a rather keener interest in "putting money into people."

This is a good deal more in line with a reasonable regard for market forces. If we want healthy industries within a Common Market then it follows that they must compete on their own merits rather than on the depth or laxity of their respective national exchequers. But competition means losers as well as winners; and society—quite rightly—is no longer prepared to buy optimum business efficiency at the price of sub-optimised personal opportunity. EEC social and economic policy makers could not—and should not try to—fix the employment pattern of Europe as on, say, midnight 31 December 1975. But if necessary adjustments and shifts are not to disrupt a large number of workers then the Commission must not only plan to phase wastage and redundancy, but also to fit people for new skills and workplaces, and to give special help to those unable to adapt or move in strict time with commercial imperatives.

The Commission have already been active in all these directions to produce reasoned and reasonable glosses on the crude play of market forces, in accord with equitable "social" costings and to deal with undesirable human side-effects. Where no such necessary inhibitions apply, however, the Commissioners are robust enough in their pursuit of positive market economics. For example they are currently chivvying Member states to back pious political assent to the principle of "open public tendering" with some modest practical advances. Contracts awarded by public and semi-public authorities in the European Nine account for 17% of total EEC consumption of goods and services! The vast majority of these contracts are settled on what the Commission describes as a "systematically national basis." Here the problem of a pretty well omnipotent Council—with a still undemocratic Parliamentary Assembly—leaves the Commission with less than the constitutional authority they need to force open this very important sector of the market to free competition.

THE COMMISSION HAVE BEEN little more successful in efforts to secure freedom of movement within the Community for professional services. Britain certainly has cause to welcome the competitive footholds now open to us in France, for example, (where much British insurance business was previously heavily handicapped). In such work the Commission has an uphill task but it is undeterred in its drive towards free competition—and, through competition, to the "acceptable human face of capitalism."

In the USA private enterprise is still but little adulterated by the operation of the social conscience. In Russia and the other Eastern bloc countries capitalism is specifically exorcised. But in the nine member countries of the EEC there is now a controlled very large-scale experiment to see whether it is possible to conserve the manifest advantages of capitalism—including its practical link with a pluralistic political democracy—while tempering the full force of liberated and stimulated competition to the wind of social change in advanced industrial economies.

THESE, THEN, ARE SOME of the main features—warts and all—of the Community economic physiognomy. What are their implications for a now fully European Britain?

In the first place we desperately need an early refuge from short-term political interventionism. Any objective observer, with his feet firmly in the business camp, would have great difficulty in calculating whether Mr Edward Heath and his ill-conducted fight with the trade unions was any better or worse for industry and commerce than Mr Harold Wilson's acceptance of the TUC as his

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political mentors. There is a growing sense of incapacity and impending catastrophe. Left to our own national devices and contrivances we are unlikely to reach the 1980s without a major financial and economic disaster.

But we shall not be left to our own devices. We represent an enormous traditional and potential asset to the rest of the Nine; and even if our current performance is less than reassuring, Italy has just demonstrated how rapidly an EEC member-state can regain its basic equilibrium, if not its full vigour. From now on British representatives on the Council will be at a considerable disadvantage in resisting the European spirit. They will have to contend with the not inconsiderable combined forces of the Commission, and the rest of the member-states. Sooner or later, and at many points all the time, some of the Community ethos and impetus will seep in. Governments, after all, must be reasonably responsive to the opinion of the electorate. People who voted for the EEC in the referendum did not do so in order to see Mr James Callaghan, Mr Tony Benn and Mr Peter Shore hold up all appreciable progress towards effective European union by a lingering hostility operated under the guise of a suddenly overdeveloped addiction to prudence and pragmatic gradualness.

We ought to seek to benefit from the Community's self-confidence and vigour—not to subsidise and bolster ourselves up for further bouts of union-dictated self-indulgence, but to begin to rethink our priorities and review our social superstitions within the salutary disciplines of the Rome Treaty and the Community institutions. The solution of our long-term economic difficulties is going to be very much easier in the full Community context where reality is accorded readier respect, and there are substantial practical aids for a temporarily embarrassed member.

Another future advantage of membership lies in the gradual shift of many cardinal elements of economic policy from National to Community control. If we want to benefit from EEC support then Britain must be prepared to do so within agreed lines of Community policy. One of the most regrettable features of business life in Britain during the last twenty years has been the rising tide of government intervention, ranging from legitimate legislation on broad social account to detailed and inexcusable meddling in individual concerns. This in itself would be bad enough, but ever since the nationalisation wave of the first post-War Labour government we have had the added problem of violent swings in industrial policy related to electoral cycles which have been getting shorter and shorter in relation to the lengthening rhythm of business investment. Government policy on electricity supply can easily change three times during the ten years it takes to get a major power station from the project stage to actual production. Now there can be major changes of Westminster fiscal policy every quarter. The pace of Community industrial policy however is damped down by intensive requirements for consultation, and all policy accepted by the Council or carried out by the Commission under already vested powers is inherently multi-partisan and correspondingly well-insulated from short-term political exigencies. A shift of major strategic elements in economic and fiscal policies from National to Community control could do much to encourage deficient investment and stimulate rather more confident management in our key industries.

THE LIKELY INFLUENCE of the Community on our trade unions is highly speculative. Certainly the widening of our insular if not incestuous labour relations to European dimensions must have some important psychological effects. After all some at least of the sharp pre-Referendum opposition to the EEC among union militants must have derived from an instinctive feeling that a Britain within the Community would be less within the effective control of organised labour. Still, we ought not to underestimate the practical influence of working in Community institutions on many British union leaders. Even if the conversion of some British ministers to Europe during renegotiations may have reflected political expediency rather than personal conviction it is still very probable that, for others, familiarity bred the end of contempt in this particular context. The same forces could operate on trade union representatives.

British trade union leaders will be obliged to accept a wide range of social and economic interests and responsibilities within the Community institutions, and this could substantially relieve the destructive and restricting effects of our own unions' concentration on wage bargaining as a primary if not sole preoccupation. Some of our more moderate unionists may well achieve European stature, and from this wider power base have some success in pushing back the recent left-wing advances in the control of many UK unions. On the other hand, present-day unionism has developed a strong taste for martyrdom in a bad cause, and it is at least as possible that a few die-hards may earn themselves (and us) a new reputation for rear-guard reaction within the positions of influence open to union spokesmen in various Community bodies.

WHAT OF THE BROADER social and political scene? The gradual extension of the operation of the Treaties could go some way in Britain to curb

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the irresponsible exploitation of parliamentary supremacy—a problem arousing strong current interest in the possibility of a written constitution. There are already important issues of economic policy on which the Rome or Paris Treaties, backed by the Community Court of Justice, would be enforceable in spite of countervailing British legislation. Progress towards European union will afford many other opportunities for the preservation of essential rights and principles in Community-written instruments. It is to be hoped that Lord Hailsham, Sir Keith Joseph, and others of like opinion will now project their recent advocacy of a written constitution on to the Community as well as the national scene.

THESE ARE, in my view, some of the general benefits that we can look for as our membership develops. What can our partners expect from us as a particularly British contribution to the European whole?

A useful improvement is already visible in the liveliness of the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, and we can hope that the innovations and energies displayed by Conservative and Liberal delegates in such fields as parliamentary interrogation of Commissioners will be reinforced by the new Labour Party contingent. A directly-elected European Parliament will have to assume much greater legislative and supervisory responsibilities. The House of Commons, though today markedly inferior in its leading personalities to governments or oppositions of twenty or thirty years ago, still has a residual vitality and a traditional strength quite undetectable in the disembodied impressions recently relayed in the new radio broadcasts. The House is an organic totality made up of committee rooms, smoking room, library, lobbies and even corridors, as well as the Chamber itself. It is still in many respects the best working instrument of Western national democracy, and we can be confident that it has much to offer in the future development of the European parliament.

Then, of course, there is the City and all that it can place at the disposal of a vigorous and re-expanding Community economy. Here our traditional resources of initiative, integrity, and impartiality have been surprisingly little affected by militant trade-union intransigence or dirigiste excesses of government intervention. The City's range of services extending to world-wide activities in commodities, shipping, insurance, and finance are already recognised by our EEC partners as considerable assets for the whole of the Community. This is one sector of our economy which is well able to act on a European scale without the all-too-familiar inhibition of traditional insularity.

There are, too, the rather more abstract advantages of our broad links with the English-speaking world. French may be a splendid language for the conduct of formal affairs in a purely European institution; but it will be many years before the USA or Australia, for example, breeds a race of multi-lingual businessmen or politicians. Until that time comes the presence and participation of the United Kingdom in the Community gives all our partners there a useful assurance of a much readier flow of communication and understanding between the EEC and the very important English-speaking countries outside it.

WHILE I HAVE BEEN concerned with the more intangible if perhaps more reliable elements of British participation in the Community, and have deliberately omitted any references to the crudely ambiguous trade and financial statistics so freely bandied about during the Referendum campaign, it is hardly possible to avoid some mention of Energy. The mere territorial possession of large quantities of oil and coal, while agreeable in time of shortages and associated high prices, carries quite different responsibilities and problems at other turns of the notoriously volatile Energy market. No one in Britain should now expect to benefit from an oasis of cheap oil and coal even in a continuing high-cost Energy world. The government, by discounting a slice of our future oil revenues to postpone public realisation of our general economic dilemma, have combined with Mr Arthur Scargill, the miners' Marxist leader to ensure that our future indigenous Energy supplies will be fully attuned to world prices.

Far from having to part with scarce national advantages to our "avaricious" European partners, we may for quite long periods have to look to the Community to help us find reliable customers for our oil and coal at something better than spot market prices. A glance at the world Energy markets since 1945 will demonstrate the folly of extrapolating shortages and high prices into an indefinite future. What Britain can quite definitely bring to the Community in Energy policy, however, is the important political advantage of oil and coal resources which (regardless of the turn of world markets) will immensely strengthen the right of the Nine to be present and heard at the World Energy Conference table. Economic jingoism at a particular turn of the Energy market as demonstrated by the recent British move for separate representation outside the EEC at the international Energy conference can bring its own devastating recoil under inevitably changing economic conditions.

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HERE, THEN—necessarily speculative and subjective—are the outlines of our new European relationship. It would be a dull second-rate world in which anyone could with any degree of accuracy forecast even the broadest outline of the EEC in ten years time. In Britain we have the special weakness of a pronounced lack of any sense of national destiny much less direction. The Government has no positive policy—tackling inflation after all, even if it has some success, is a pure remedial and neutral activity. The Opposition is clearly determined to avoid the early risk of assuming responsibility. The great bulk of the population is disenchanted if not disillusioned with both of them. We have no national policies, or even attitudes, which because we know them to be good for Britain we can confidently advocate and extend into the Community. This vacuum is bound to restrict UK official representation to a largely responsive and reactive role in many EEC discussions and must inhibit positive initiatives by British spokesmen.

Can we hope that it may be possible to acquire a sense of purpose by a sort of participatory osmosis as our spokesmen sit side by side with other more self-confident and well-orientated people at numerous Community conference tables? Or, alternatively, will some British government some day be able to find and touch the hidden spring of loyalty and sacrifice which many of us still believe to be our most important national resource and the best gift that we could possibly bring to the common purpose and prosperity of the new Europe?

Flesh

I write these lines in praise of my home,
  Which is flesh.
I am a permanent inhabitant;
Have never lived anywhere else.

I bite an apple: the stiff crunch, my teeth
Slicing the tangible damp tissue,
  The world's flesh.
I eat this world: nothing else nourishes.

I dive in lakes: the slap, the tear of foam,
The stiff support of water under the arms,
  The rub of flesh.
Naked, I wear the world's body.

If I worry and grow thin, flesh shrinks.
If stouter, there is only flesh to grow.
  My bones
Wear nothing else. I'd be lost without it.

But now, here, in this ragged garden,
Among the hum and swell, the continuings,
  Suddenly the blue
And faceless gaps between the trees

Are where I long to be, outside
Of this endless becoming, this buzz,
This warm incipient rot.

There is someone I cannot touch:
Somewhere I am banished from;
Some act of cruelty locked me in.

Laurence Lerner

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Robert Strausz-Hupé

Maxims

ALL THE REAL PROBLEMS of one's life are insoluble. To be aware of them and live with them at peace, this is wisdom.

TO BEAR WITH OUR FATE we must embrace it as if we had freely chosen it.

IT IS MUCH EASIER to abide by a Great Truth than to be truthful about small matters.

TRUTH is not given us. We find it whenever we have failed to deceive ourselves.

IT IS MORE DIFFICULT to unravel a half-truth than to spot a falsehood. Only fools tell complete lies.

WE ARE DECEIVED only by what we take for granted. We are betrayed not by the inconsistency of men and things, but by our own inattentiveness.

THE LESS WE KNOW about another man's life, the bolder will be our suggestions for improving it.

WE CANNOT HELP OTHERS to live better lives; but we can help them to live *their* lives better.

WE KNOW ABOUT our future a great deal more than we care to admit to ourselves. Women are better than men at subduing the qualms of this knowledge. This is why, notwithstanding the certainty of man's fate, the race, without any qualms, perpetuates itself.

IF WE COULD NOT BLINK at the certainty of our fate, the satiation of our lusts would leave us even sadder than nature has meant us to be.

WE MOST DEEPLY REPENT the sins which we committed in good conscience.

WE MOST DEEPLY RESENT those wrongs that others have done us in good conscience.

THERE ARE NO WORDS of wisdom about the human condition that have not been spoken by somebody at some time. The wisest and, hence, the least vain among us are sparing of words of wisdom—or do not speak at all.

GENERATIONAL CONFLICT is the clash between those who have forgotten too much and those who have too little to remember.

IT SHOCKS THE OLD that the young are as sensual as they themselves have been. It shocks the young that the old were sensual enough to beget them.

TO BE YOUNG is to discover the world as if it were new, and to search for its meaning as if, ever since creation, everybody else had missed it.

THE YOUNG, GENEROUS of heart, will forgive the old for most vices, but not for those which the young consider only themselves fit to practice.

IT BECOMES old men to seek solitude. If they cannot bear to be alone they are likely to make a nuisance of themselves to those whose concerns they can no longer share. Alone, they can prepare themselves to do what must be done alone.

ONE NEEDS TO KNOW next to nothing about

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life in order to thoroughly enjoy it. To keep this truth from leaking, this is the common cause of all those who make their living from teaching others about living.

THE HAPPIEST MARRIAGES are those that are sustained by a mutually cherished misunderstanding.

THE MORE ARDENT is a love affair, the more likely it is to end with a yawn.

MOST MEN DO NOT CAVIL at opportunism in others as long as they think they can discern it and put it to their own use.

THE MOST dangerous rogues are the lovable ones.

EXTRAORDINARY success comes only to the extraordinarily ambitious. It is this, rather than any superior endowment of mind or character, which makes us uneasy in the presence of extraordinarily successful men.

EVERY MAXIM reveals something about the author which, were it not for his pride of authorship, he would rather have kept to himself.

THERE ARE MEN who will serve whoever is master. They are base. There are masters who let themselves be served by such men. They are not only base but also foolish.

MOST MEN speak the truth for want of imagination.

WE NEED TO KNOW a great deal about life in order to understand how much happier we would be if we knew less.

SINCE A MAN, in the course of his life, is never the same person to himself, not to speak of being the same person to others, searching for his identity is like asking a stranger for the number of his private telephone.

SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW whence we came and where we are going, we are likely to be mistaken when we think that we know where we are.

WE COUNT our blessings only after we have resigned ourselves to the fact that we cannot hope for any additional ones.

SAVE FOR ONE CERTAIN outcome, the future is unpredictable. Hence, one can lie about it only to those who want to believe the impossible.

THE ISSUE of loyalty arises only when our loyalties are divided.

THE ONLY CONFIDENCES likely to be kept are those not worth keeping.

ONLY RICH MEN can dwell nostalgically on how happy they were when they were poor.

ALL GREAT TRAGEDIES are a trifle silly. This is their tragedy.

ANYTHING THAT we disclose about the intimacy of our lives is both a breach of confidence and an offence to good taste.

THE QUAINTEST among our superstitions is the belief that we have none.

EVERY MAXIM is a shade trite—including, of course, this one.

IF WE CANNOT believe that it is Great Men who make history, then we can be never certain that anybody has made it—that history is "made", rather than just happening. Without myths, history would be a tale about everything and nothing, told by an unprogrammed computer.

PEACE AMONG NATIONS is wrought from every kind of disposition, but never from the love of peace: the issues of yesterday are no longer worth fighting for, and those of today call for new alignments. Surfeit, lassitude, fear and weakness: these are the doves of peace between sovereign states.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN nations never arise from misunderstandings. A people needs to understand a great deal about another in order to mistrust and hate it.

THE DECLINE of a great nation begins with the failure of its will to power, not with the diminishment of its possessions. That decline can no longer be halted when its people

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have come to believe that the devotions which made it great now demean it—and that history no longer matters.

HISTORY HAS made us; we are stuck with it. But we are free to decide how much of it to remember and how much to forget. This is the measure of Free Will.

UNDER DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM, others are free to question our democratic convictions. By bearing with this onerous condition, we retain the option of retaliating in kind. This is the democratic dialogue.

ALTHOUGH NO FORM of government is better than the men who serve it, democracy comes closest to goodness: The ambitious few must seek to assuage the distrust of the many by the pretence of humble service to the common good. So intense is the competition for votes that, sometimes, the politician must actually do what he is in the habit of pretending.

THE PRETENCE of democracy is the compliment which tyranny pays to freedom.

REVOLUTIONS are conceived in the minds not of those who are out of sympathy with the society in which they live, but of those who live in a society of their imagination.

THE CERTAINTIES of any revolutionary doctrine are wrought from the doubts of the ruling élite. Revolutions do not begin in the study or the street, but in the Establishment's troubled conscience.

THE BEST CONSERVATIVE causes have been lost by inflexibility, and the best liberal ones by vacillation.

FORESIGHT has always been the mark of statesmanship. The modern statesman must not only plan far ahead but also tell his people about the shape of things to come—though not too soon, lest his people no longer remember what he has been so right about in foreseeing.

THAT MEN CAN and ought to be made better than they want to be, this is the most fetching and the most evil idea of politics.

SOME IDEOLOGIES are more pernicious than others. The most pernicious ones are fitted together from right ideas that are wrong in the aggregate.

NO POLITICAL IDEA is altogether new. Its time has come when large numbers of men feel as if they had thought of it themselves. This is to politics what critical mass is to physics.

TO GOVERN is to make no more decisions than are necessary.

THE BANE OF MODERN government is the ease with which many decisions can be made quickly.

A POLITICIAN might be ahead of his times. He is unlikely to succeed at his calling, if he does not let the times and his followers catch up with him.

IN POLITICS, those come to the top who display steadfastness in following the line of least resistance.

WHENEVER A politician-in-office says that the situation now calls for realism, he is about to ditch those who voted for him because he appealed to them in the name of idealism.

ALL GOVERNMENT is rule by the few over the many. That, in an oligarchy, the ruling class is more exclusive than it really is, this is aristocratic pretentiousness. That, in a democracy, the ruling class is more open than it really is, this is egalitarian cant. Both conceits are necessary for the welfare of the respective establishments.

AMONG ALL SYSTEMS of government, democracy is the most forgetful, while tyranny has the longest memory. This is why democracy can least afford the cult of youth: the young have so little to remember.

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Kit Wright

Versions Of Dr Tyerley

(Dr Tyerley practised in a Victorian mental hospital and believed in the psychotherapeutic value of cricket.)

(1) A Player to the Luncheon Guests

I was a bowler for Dr Tyerley's team
  That played another of this name
Lately, on the Doctor's grounds. You came,
  You remember, by the privet gate
    To the field's edge that day
    To see the madmen play—
And the Doctor's Burgundy and haunch of pork
Slurred in your bellies as rich talk
    Of Hunt and Steam and State
    Gave, down the orchard, way
      To a white gleam
Of us odd fellows dancing the Doctor's dream.

But I was a bowler for Dr Tyerley's side
  Against another—his men too—
And the first trick of all was mine to do:
  Bowl the first ball, begin the game.
    I tell you this is so:
    I could not let it go.
I ran up to the stumps. Then shied. Stopped.
Three times I tried. And stuck. So I was dropped
    From the Doctor's side. The shame
    Killed me when I came
      To the tree where he tied
My arms and legs and left me. I'm a wide.

(2) A Player to the Doctor

Fat Dr Tyerley
  Sweatily scrabbled:
Played the game hard.
Charged round the yard
Like a bull in a ring,
Booming us on
For the game was the thing
To make a man well:

Dear Dr Tyerley,
How could you tell?

Fat Dr Tyerley
  Grovelled and grappled:
Hurled the burst ball
At the stump-painted wall,
Cranked the chipped bat
That was gone in the spring,
Thundered *How's that?*
At a wicket laid low:

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Sweet Dr Tyerley,
How should we know?

Fat Dr Tyerley
  Mightily struggled:
Rearing and clouting,
Praising and shouting
Over the scrum
In the exercise yard
Of the wailing and dumb
Advice and abuse:

Kind Dr Tyerley,
What was the use?

Much, Dr Tyerley.
  Sadly we straggled:
I and the rest,
Players long past our best,
Kept, mortally, error,
That lay beyond games,
But who, from locked terror,
First gave me the key?

You, Dr Tyerley,
Playing for me.

Geoffrey Grigson

Sicut Omnes

I visit my abandoned caves, white dust lies
On what is infrequently disturbed;
On forgotten books and old unbalanced
Accounts. In cavern stables rotten harness
Hangs out of the rock-cut mangers, and I come across
Tools, and weapons, whose handles of hickory crumble
The moment I touch them. Elsewhere old-fashioned
Clothes hang among cobwebs. Also another
Chamber contains certain beauties asleep, to be woken
Never, and that is myself alongside them.
Returning to green light, coming out into sunlight
Or into rain, that is better, under twinkle or falling
Of leaves. Not thinking too much; if I can,
Continuing aware, in my shreds of being, under
Leaves twinkling or yellow and falling;
On the low terrace in the old terms saying,
Although you may not listen, ecstasy
And then as well peace be with you.

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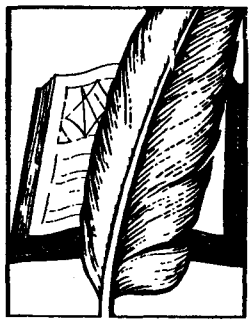

Column

THIS SECOND VOLUME of *The Gulag Archipelago*[1] comprises Parts III and IV of the original Russian edition. Parts V and VI are still to come, and I for one must say that I await them with the same kind of fascinated anticipation as I felt before these two volumes were originally published in English.

For *The Gulag Archipelago* is such an extraordinary book that it is difficult to think of anything quite like it in literature; one reads it, or at least I do, with the same kind of intense absorption as, one imagines, the early devotees of James Joyce read the first published extracts of *Ulysses*. The comparison is not frivolous; for both books create, as few others do, a complete and entire world, which with time, and study, and effort becomes as familiar to us as the palm of our own hand.

The Gulag Archipelago has now become like some newly discovered country, of which once we knew little or nothing, except that it actually existed, and even this was, for some, open to doubt. Very few of its early explorers survived the hardships of their travels; and the tales they brought back with them gave us very little information that seemed trustworthy. Indeed, some of their stories were so incredible that it seemed more charitable to believe that their ordeals had driven their wits astray rather than that they were setting out deliberately to deceive us.

Moreover, very few of them penetrated beyond the fringe of this unknown continent. But gradually others pushed into the interior, and some even settled down among the natives, and learned their language and conventions and customs; geographers and geologists and anthropologists and doctors and missionaries followed in their footsteps, the country's great rivers were traced to their source, its highest peaks conquered, its tundras and deserts and icy wastes were crossed and recrossed from north to south and from east to west, until finally we were able to build up a complete picture of this strange, savage, alien land, that had for so many years existed unknown and undiscovered almost on our own doorstep. We knew its climate, its geography, its history, its political and legal organisation, its myths and its literature and its tribal customs, and then at last all this knowledge was collected together for us in one great book, which will remain forever a classic of its kind, so that if ever one day some seismological upheaval should bury that terrible country beneath the sea, the book would continue to be read by our children and our children's children because of the terrors and wonders of the great dark continent which it describes.

So it is with the Gulag Archipelago and Solzhenitsyn's book. To anyone who has not read it, one would find it difficult to convey the book's scope and quality and originality, and if one says that there is nothing quite like it in literature, that is not perhaps surprising, because after all there never was anything like the Gulag Archipelago itself; that is to say, the penal system and institutions which the Soviet Union has created in order to torture, mutilate and murder its own citizens.

OF COURSE, THERE HAVE BEEN other accounts of the Archipelago as well as Solzhenitsyn's. Some were the personal recollections of men and women who had survived the ordeals of living in this hideous territory, others the products of years of patient and scholarly research. Many of them are admirable, and certainly indispensable to the serious student of the Archipelago. And of course there are also those curious collections of travellers' tales, like the Webbs', which long before the actual existence of the Archipelago had been verified told us of a mythical Utopia somewhere in the East, where men and women had all the innocence of primitive savages combined with the scientific sophistication of the most advanced civilisations and lived in a land flowing with milk and honey where poverty and cruelty and injustice were unknown. Today, historians still debate whether these early travellers ever actually set foot on the Archipelago, or whether they merely made their stories up out of their own heads. On the whole modern research tends to the view that they were simply refurbishing, in modern dress as it were, ancient myths and legends which have been dear to the heart of man ever since he first emerged into history.

But none of these books, good as some of them are, and whatever their kind or quality, embraces the totality of the Archipelago in the same way as Solzhenitsyn's. It has something of the universality, both in detail and in conception, of Dante's description of Hell, and it is part of its tragedy that it could never end as the *Inferno* does;

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle
(And from thence we emerged to see the stars)

It is perhaps this sense of total knowledge, as if no corner of the Archipelago had been left

[1] *The Gulag Archipelago*. Volume II. By ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN. Translated by THOMAS P. WHITNEY, Collins/Harvill, £4.95.

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unexplored, that so convinces us of the truth of Solzhenitsyn's book; it would be impossible to invent or fabricate anything which was both so meticulously detailed and so self-consistent. Solzhenitsyn's overwhelming triumph is that he makes the Archipelago a living reality to us, that in the most literal sense he gives it a local habitation and a name. Given the nature of his subject matter, of the almost incredible horror of the story which he has been at such immense pains to record, this is an effect which only a very great writer could have achieved; it also makes his book one of the most shattering blows that has ever been delivered at the ruling class of the Soviet Union, from Lenin down to Brezhnev.

YET, STRANGELY ENOUGH, despite the horrors, the cruelty, savagery, the sheer inhumanity, in which *The Gulag Archipelago* abounds, it leaves one with a perverse desire to visit the Archipelago for oneself, just as some books leave one with a desire to visit the Arctic or the Congo or the Amazon. Is it because one feels that, for Solzhenitsyn himself, his treasure and his wealth lie in the Archipelago? Or is it because one fears that, unless one sees these things for oneself, one will never really understand what life can be like?

I do not know the answers to such questions, but they suddenly reminded me of one of my favourite (and most complicated) sentences in the English language:

> "A new voice hailed me of an old friend when, first returned from the Peninsula, I paced again in that long street of Damascus which is called Straight; and suddenly taking me wondering by the hand, 'Tell me (said he) since thou art here again in the peace and assurance of Ullah, and whilst we walk, as in the former years, towards the new blossoming orchards, full of the sweet spring as the garden of God, what moved thee, or how could'st thou take such journeys into the fanatic Arabia?' "

It is, of course, the opening sentence of one of the greatest classics of exploration, Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, a book which resembles *The Gulag Archipelago* in a certain massive grandeur, as if both came from a more heroic, almost mythical, world than the one in which we are accustomed to live. I am confirmed in the belief that the two books have much in common by the preface which T. E. Lawrence wrote for the one-volume edition of *Arabia Deserta* which was published in 1924. "I have grown," says Lawrence, "to consider it a book not like other books, but something particular, a bible of its kind. . . . Doughty's completeness is devastating. There is nothing we could take away, little we could add. He takes all Arabia for his province, and has left to his successors only the poor part of specialists. We may write books on part of the desert or some of the history of it; but there can never be another picture of the whole, in our time, because here it is all said, and by a great master." Make the necessary substitutions and all this applies to Solzhenitsyn. But perhaps one should add what Lawrence says, not about Doughty, but about the desert Arab: "His desert is made a spiritual ice-house, in which is preserved intact but unimproved for all ages an idea of the unity of God." That also perhaps applies to Solzhenitsyn.

★

"IN HYPERINFLATION, a kilo of potatoes was worth, to some, more than the family silver; a side of pork more than the grand piano. A prostitute in the family was better than an infant corpse; theft was better than starvation; warmth was finer than honour, clothing more essential than democracy, food more needed than freedom."

The quotation is from the final paragraph of Adam Fergusson's *When Money Dies*,[2] which is an account of the great inflation of the currency which ravaged Germany in 1923. In many people's view, the inflation was the death blow to democracy in Germany, even though it took ten years before its effects were fully worked out; what is certain, I think, is that it destroyed the German middle class, which provided the only element of stability in the Germany which emerged out of her defeat in 1918.

Yet one should remember that it was not only Germany which endured inflation, though in no other country did it take quite such a catastrophic form. After the First World War, inflation raged throughout Europe, and engendered a series of political convulsions from which it has never in any true sense recovered. Writing in 1922, Keynes surveyed the European scene:

> The inflation of the currency system of Europe has proceeded to extraordinary lengths. The various belligerent governments, unable, or too timid and short-sighted, to secure from loans or taxation the resources they required, have printed for the balance. In Russia and Austria-Hungary this process has reached a point where for the purpose of foreign exchange the currency is practically useless. The Polish mark can be bought for about three cents and the Austrian crown for less than two cents, but they cannot be sold at all . . . the currency of Italy has fallen to a little more than half its normal value in spite of its being subject to some degree of regulation; French currency retains an uncertain value; and even sterling is seriously diminished in present value and impaired in its future prospects.

[2] *When Money Dies*. By ADAM FERGUSSON. William Kimber, £5.25.

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Keynes went on to say: "We are faced in Europe with a spectacle of an extraordinary weakness on the part of that great capitalist class which has emerged from the industrial triumph of the nineteenth century, and seemed a very few years ago our all powerful master."

Keynes wrote as a financial and economic expert, but the troubles he discussed left a profound impression on the folk-memories of Europe, particularly in Germany, where inflation reached a peak which has never been exceeded in any advanced industrial country. But it should be remembered that, in Europe, this experience was repeated after the Second World War, and again, especially, in Germany. In Berlin, in 1945, one could satisfy any of one's sexual appetities, however bizarre, at the price of a bar of chocolate or a packet of cigarettes. In the unofficial market outside the bombed-out shell of the Reichstag, one could see again precisely the scenes described by Mr Fergusson, of once respectable middle-class men and women peddling their household goods and valuables for trifling sums in order to buy food. Who will ever forget, who saw them, those stalwart Siberian soldiers, their forearms strapped with wrist-watches up to the elbow, listening delightedly to the fascinating tic-toc of the mysterious time-machines of a ruined capitalist class? And how can one explain the profound shock one felt when one was approached, as a British officer, by an old German friend with the offer of a bribe to provide her with the use of an army lorry to carry out some complicated black-market deal? Of course, one was silly to be shocked, when such transactions were being carried out all over Germany every day.

We in Britain, after both the First and the Second World War, have been fortunate enough to be spared such experiences, and perhaps this partly explains why the spectre of inflation has never seemed to us as grim and menacing as it does to our continental neighbours. We have never grasped the fact that, beyond a certain point, inflation is not merely a monetary or a financial phenomenon, but a moral one, because it introduces into people's lives a factor of uncertainty and incalculability which makes nonsense of all the rules by which they normally live. In the world of hyperinflation the only realities are a loaf of bread, a lump of sugar, a packet of fags, or, as Brecht puts it more succinctly:

Erst kommt das Fressen
Dann kommt die Moral

(Grub first;
Morality later.)

I DO NOT THINK that, in spite of all the sermons which politicians have preached to us on the subject, we in Britain have as yet realised all the evils which inflation involves. We are still inclined to think that, at the worst, it would only affect our pockets, and everything else would continue as before. But nothing is quite the same as before, if your pockets are empty or their contents are worthless.

Of course it is true that in this country inflation has not yet reached a point where it represents a threat to all established institutions and conventions, and there are even some slight signs that at length inflation may be under control. Yet an inflation rate of rather over 25% is a frighteningly high level, and only optimists, I think, would place any faith in Mr Denis Healey's promise that in the course of 1976 it will be reduced to 10%. In Germany, by comparison, inflation is running at the rate of 5%, and even at that level the Germans still do not feel it is safe to relax the stern measures they have taken to bring it under control.

The trouble is, of course, that such measures entail unemployment, at a level which no one in this country (or at least no one who is likely to be affected by it) regards as acceptable. The government, for instance, is always careful to say that any measures taken to control inflation must also take into account its primary object of maintaining full employment.

It is very difficult for ordinary citizens like myself to interpret such phrases as these. On the whole, one takes them to mean that wherever there is an identifiable conflict between controlling inflation and reducing unemployment, the second objective will take priority over the first. Here again, Mr Fergusson, in his rather grim way, is helpful. "The conflicting objectives of avoiding unemployment and avoiding insolvency ceased at last to conflict when Germany had both." This seems the kind of solution which Britain is trying to find for its present difficulties.

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AMERICAN CHRONICLE

On the Toughness of the "Tough Guy"

By Rupert Wilkinson

WHEN Senator George McGovern, in April 1972, had become a leading contender for the Democratic Party nomination, a Washington columnist, David Broder, wrote an article reappraising the candidate. According to Broder, the essential point about McGovern that reporters had overlooked was his "toughness." Quite apart from his World War II record (as a bomber pilot), this "soft-voiced sometime minister and college teacher" had risked his family's economic security to build a successful Democratic organisation in the Republican stronghold of South Dakota. Broder gave some details of McGovern's political rise and the seriousness of his bid for the Presidency, and concluded: "Tough. Very tough."

In January 1973, when George McGovern had given a lecture at Oxford about his landslide defeat in the autumn election, the Washington columnist Joseph Kraft took him to task for blaming the American political system. The real causes of the defeat, Kraft said, were the candidate's tactical errors and his personality. He plainly lacked "the toughness of mind, the breadth of experience, the judgment of men and the personal presence that are required for the White House." And so he "never had the enthusiastic support of the strong men who have been the mainstays of the Democratic party. . . ."

Statements of this sort tell us as much about American culture as about the 1972 election. Despite the historical distance of the frontier, the rise of Women's Lib, the demise of the crew-cut, and the flowering of counter-cultures, images of dynamic toughness—in body, word, and thought—remain an important part of the American male's ideal reputation in many walks of life. The survival is most obvious in the media. The firm jaws of the cowboys who still advertise Marlboro cigarettes, the box office supremacy of John Wayne, the television success of master cops like Kojak and Steve McGarrett of *Hawaii Five-O*—these are not isolated phenomena.

In politics, the last four Administrations have all had their cults of toughness, but the Nixon men seem to have talked it up the most. As a prime exhibit, one might mention the celebrated statement by the White House aide, Charles Colson, that, yes, it was true he would run over his grandmother if necessary to win the election; or Spiro Agnew's attacks on various social critics as "effete" snobs; or Richard Nixon's own recurrent talk about "tough decisions", his defiant "the tougher it gets, the cooler I get", and the cold-operator language of the Watergate tapes—*e.g.* "tough it out" and "go the hang-out road" for stonewalling evasion.

Presidents seem particularly attracted to tough talk when the policy or conduct at issue is of doubtful toughness. Lyndon Johnson declared that "American boys" in Viet Nam "walk tall" at a time when the American military presence there was marked by well-publicised morale problems and dependence on an air-power which was devastating much of the civilian South. Spokesmen for the incoming Nixon Administration asked that no legislative or administrative whirlwind should be expected of them, by declaring that they would keep a "low profile" (image of tanks or cruisers on the skyline?). Later in the Administration, an economic "game plan" was announced, mildly relying on unenforced guidelines and "jawboning" (exhortatory discussions with diverse groups to hold down prices and wages). President Ford spoke in much the same way about his "grand design" against inflation in late 1974. Past programmes did not "pack the punch that [would] turn on America's economy"; Congress would not accept even a "marshmallow" policy; "tougher turkey" might be needed. The President in fact proposed quite minor fiscal changes, but he did issue WIN buttons to encourage citizens to waste less and grow more.

ONE MUST ADMIT THAT the Fourth Estate's feel for the pungent greatly amplifies the tough-guy language of American politics. Terms like "political muscle" and "clout" are still favourites with reporters; and it was Joseph Alsop, one of the more he-man columnists, who coined the usage "hawks" and "doves" during the Cuban

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missile crisis of 1962 (with some precedent in the "War Hawks" of 1812). Nevertheless, a review of American slang shows that the bases of male toughness idiom extend far beyond the particular motivations of politicians and media men.

For example, the list of current or recent American terms for effeminate or soft individuals far exceeds the British list. Omitting the special words for homosexuals, we have (among others):

sissy, milquetoast, cream-puff, cookie-pusher, patsy, pushover, pussyfooter, quitter, mama's boy, chicken, panty-waist, yellow.

On the other side of the coin, American slang provides an enormous number of words and phrases with connotations of acquisitive aggression, conflict, impact, speed, and dynamic energy. The tendency is not confined to slang. In the autobiographical accounts of Harvard graduates printed in class directories over the past fifteen years, the commonest adjectives used to describe their work and ambitions are "exciting" and "challenging." Another linguistic phenomenon might be called *mecho-macho*: the use of terms connoting technological power, massivity, or concreteness. The imagery of computers and aerospace here is particularly attractive. Quite simple information received, say, by a school board concerning its pupils may be called an *input*. Sales plans are *generated*. By-products are called *spinoffs*. Awkward problems or clients are not always stalled; sometimes they are put into a *holding pattern*. And so on.

Can one unite all these themes in a central definition?

IN ABSTRACT TERMS I think there are four underpinning elements.

First, a concern (often unconscious or semi-conscious) to be and seem tough, especially in the sense of facing up to adversaries. Secondly, the concern to be dynamic, crisp, vigorous, hard-hitting, aggressive. Thirdly, a model of the "can-do guy", emphasising technical competence, high performance in the eyes of others, and practical effectiveness in demanding circumstances. Fourthly, an association of the above elements with masculine identity and virility. A concomitant is an overtone of body-consciousness and narcissism, reflected perhaps in styles of walking and voice production but also in terms like "posture" (a Pentagon favourite in reference to America's defences) and various phrases about job-performance: "you're *looking good*"; "we're in *great shape*"; "if I *handle myself* well. . . ."

This syndrome is not identical with other masculinity cults of the modern world. It does not, for example, have the same passionate sexual codes as Latin *machismo*. At first blush it may look like the pre-Fascist Italian cult of *Futurismo*, with its sexual revelling in technology, strength, and speed, but the main American styles are more controlled, less authoritarian, and less apt to pit images of the machine *against* images of rural nature. The most similar patterns to the Americans are perhaps to be found in Australia, but the chief expressions of masculinity there appear to be less intricately involved in technology and organisation, and in the past they have been less explicitly mobilised against effeminacy.

This is not to claim that there are male styles of toughness which are solely and uniformly American. Quite aside from foreign imitations of American culture, there is manifold evidence that in many societies maleness is popularly associated with relative aggressiveness and physical roughness. But obviously, societies vary in the stress they place on male aggression and toughness, and the kind of channels they provide for it. Within a society, too, individuals, groups and regions will vary.

One can still pick out a general tendency. In this case I am focusing most particularly on a *middle-* and *upper-class* male American tendency, because it is most strikingly American in these strata. From cursory observations I would guess that there are cults of toughness among Hoboken dockers which are not shared much by East London dockers, but I would be less prepared to make the distinction on that level. In modern industrial society, manual work and the conditions that tend to go with it often encourage an emphasis on physical prowess, toughness, and bluntness which cuts across national boundaries.

NO STUDY, to my knowledge, has set out systematically to trace and explain male toughness concern as a general development in American history and culture. Historians have sometimes given it a cursory reference in explaining political and social behaviour in certain periods. Literary scholars have attributed it to such figures as Jack London, Hemingway, Mailer, and "hard-boiled" detective writers. The most persistent recourse to theories about masculine toughness has appeared in studies of deviant behaviour, especially juvenile delinquency and aspects of male life in the ghetto. During the past few years the Indo-China war has prompted the occasional political writer to descry a "hairy chest syndrome" (as one put it) among Washington policy-makers; but this again has very largely been seen as the pathology of a discrete group. Some works, it is true, have postulated a general American male concern about virility as a reaction against the powerful influences of "Mom", but few of these have explained historically what has produced the kind of Mom they have in mind and they have

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said very little about influences outside of child-rearing which may also heighten male concern with toughness.[1]

Some of the historical roots of this concern go back to before the Republic, although it seems that the predominant toughness styles have changed in the 20th century, away from an exuberant shagginess to an emphasis on careful training and conditioning. At least three historical factors stand out.

1. In the first place, there was an early and continued use of Europe as a negative reference point for American identity: a patriotic (and puritan) view of proper American traits as essentially un-European or un-British. Befitting the New Nation, forged in moral hope amid the wilderness, the true American was vigorous, manly and direct, not decadent, effeminate, and corrupt like the supposed European. He was plain rather than fancy, rugged rather than luxury-seeking, a liberty-loving common man or natural gentleman rather than an aristocratic oppressor or servile minion. So the stereotypes went, and their charge was not lessened by an ambivalent attraction to the refinements, traditions and rootedness of the Old World.

AN UNEQUAL MATCH

2. The second factor led on from the first—the romanticising of the frontier, the American displayed as a dynamic individualist, riding across nature's grand canvas, technically adept but stripped lean by exigency.

3. And then thirdly, there are the contrary pressures levied by a highly commercial civilisation: on the one hand, the pressure to "go-getting" enterprise, production, material achievements; on the other hand, the pressure to consume, be indulged, and amiably follow others, caused in part by the very affluence and organisation which business has made. American men, in short, have been likely to feel soft and dependent where they feel they should be more rugged and aggressive, however unfair to themselves this is. Child-rearing patterns and qualities of "Mom" are important factors here, but their place can only be understood when some of the historical background is filled in.

The Un-Europeans

IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA, leading newspapers frequently indicted imported luxuries as a cause of vice and idleness. The Boston Tea Party, while attacking British tax policies, drew support from a belief that tea was unhealthy and enervating. Long after the Revolution, public leaders and writers associated foreign accoutrements and art with waste, social division, and effeteness, while the strongest voices for native painting and architecture stressed their patriotic potential.

The association between foreign cultivations and effeminacy was sharpened by the rise of the "Common Man" in American politics. The "Log Cabin" campaign of 1840 was perhaps his supreme celebration. Managers of the Whigs, the party of property conservatism, deliberately outdid the Democrats in making demagogic appeals to anti-élitism and the rising political consciousness of Western settlers. The Whig leaders focused on issues of personal style to conceal their party's deep divisions over policy. They successfully ran for President a solid and sensible Indian-fighter, General William Harrison, as their candidate against the able, sophisticated President Martin Van Buren who had succeeded Andrew Jackson ("King Andrew" to enemies, "Old Hickory" to followers). Harrison, a landed Virginian of distinguished ancestry, was represented as a yeoman Cincinnatus, and a log cabin and a "hard cider" barrel were widely publicised as his symbols. Whig propaganda presented in

[1] Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People* (1948), and Eric Dingwall, *The American Woman* (1956), do relate virility concerns to "Mom" in an historical context. Among sociologists of deviance and the ghetto, David Matza, Gresham Sykes, and Ulf Hannerz have briefly noted the parallels between gang and ghetto styles and "subterranean values" on toughness and aggression in American society at large. Peter Shaw ("The Tough Guy Intellectual", *Critical Quarterly*, No. 1, 1966) has traced toughness and related values through a wide range of American literature, and reflected on what this says about American intellectuals.

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Van Buren a "used up" little fop with traitorous, monarchic pretensions, who wore women's corsets and scented his "Sweet Sandy Whiskers" with "Double Extract of Queen Victoria"! Whig patricians went common-man: Governor Seward of New York trundled between campaign stops in a covered wagon, and General James Wilson of New Hampshire hailed himself as "a rough unhewn block from the Granite State." But just as effective were the truly plebeian, local orators who rose east and west to take the new Whig line, including a host of blacksmiths and cobblers who made a great show of hammering their enemies. The Democrats tried to answer in kind, tagging Harrison as a drunken "Old Granny", picturing Whig leaders as "starch-wasp-waisted demagogues" and "city dandlings" with silken sunshades, praising the "hard-fisted yeoman that toils in the fields", and publishing a campaign paper, *The Rough-Hewer*, to match the Whigs' *Log Cabin*. All in vain, but at the polls the popular vote was up by more than 50% over the previous Presidential election.

Since the era of the Log Cabin campaign, themes in the Whig attack on Van Buren have been echoed in attacks on diplomats. Congressmen and others in the 19th century were often suspicious of extensive diplomacy abroad. Its niceties represented waste, entrapment, and corruption. The diplomatic service was accused (not without some accuracy) of providing billets for well-connected young men who wanted to take on a bit of foreign culture. In 1905, the President, Theodore Roosevelt, keen to professionalise the State Department, identified "what I call the pink tea type, who merely reside in the service instead of working for it." From the 1920s to the 1950s, State Department men were frequently called "cookie-pushers," and sometimes "pansies," even by liberals like Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins, exasperated with foreign service bureaucracy. Such terms became more sombre in the years of Joe McCarthyism when a smear campaigned linked "softness" on Communism to alleged State Department homosexuality. In the words of McCarthy, the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, was a "pompous diplomat in striped pants, with a phoney British accent" whose "lace handkerchief crowd" had betrayed South Korea and American GIs to the Communists. By present standards, of course, Acheson was an anti-communist hardliner, but these were the years of an anxious Americanism when a young Richard Nixon could describe Acheson's policies as "cowardly containment."

ON A FAR DIFFERENT PLANE from that of the swaggering, coarse McCarthy and the libellers of Van Buren, American writers and artists too have tried to define American-ness in terms of rough and original vigour versus smooth imitations of Europe. Even Longfellow, more cosmopolitan than many, declared: "we want a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering on the prairie." But perhaps the most creative expression of the American tough-guy need is to be found in the musical work of Charles Ives, both his compositions and his writing about music. A highly successful, and original, insurance executive, Ives wrote music that in places makes a deliberate frontal assault on what he saw as "sissy" European chamber music. His journal notes make the same points, against the conventions of "Nice Old Ladies", but his conception of a "natural procedure" in music, his metaphor of the mountain climber, and his reflections on music and literature show a mind which was far more positive than negative.

The Frontier

THE MAIN CONVENTIONS of colonial New England did not glorify isolated settlement, and during much of the 19th century the respectable East associated cowboys and their ilk with a disreputable wildness. Nevertheless, from early on, frontiersmen exhibited great powers of self-advertisement. Through the tall tale of south-western humour, hunters or riverboatmen would boast to adversaries of marvellous origins and powers, as if whistling in the dark, finding but their own selves to sustain them. "Look at me . . . sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake . . . tough as hickory and long-winded as a nor'-wester." Mythical supermen appeared—Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, John Henry—and in their own lifetimes real frontier figures, assisted by reporters, biographers and ghost writers, acquired prodigious reputations. Davy Crockett parlayed his into a political career, Bill Cody into the Wild West Show of Buffalo Bill and almost countless dime novels about him. Andrew Jackson, the first President with a raw frontier background, inspired an enormous output of literary hero-worship in which he variously represented a military genius against the British, the leader of Kentucky hunters, a seasoned man of iron will, a prophet of natural wisdom, and a self-made giant tempered by compassionate understanding.

Not all the frontier's myth-making was done by its own. During the 19th and early 20th centuries a number of influential Easterners immersed themselves in the West and publicised it, often in response to illness or social frustrations and restrictions at home. The admiration of strong Westerners was particularly pronounced

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among three of this group who lived in the west in the late 19th century—Theodore Roosevelt; the artist and writer, Frederic Remington; and Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian.* Remington's praise of ranch foremen is almost entirely in character with all three of them: "If a man is to hold down a big ranch . . . he has to be 'all man', because it is a 'man's' job." This note was echoed by magazine writers mourning what seemed to be the "passing of the West" and the threat of civilisation to cowboy life. Western novels and movies have, of course, carried forward the Eastern and urban thraldom with bronzed, virile men of the range. Often seen through the eyes of a woman or a tenderfoot, the heroes of the most successful Western novels are described lovingly in greater *physical* detail than, say, a G. A. Henty or John Buchan hero, or even Bulldog Drummond; and at the same time they show a total competence and practical wisdom.

IN OUR OWN ERA, commerce and organisation have flooded everyday life with Western and pseudo-Western icons, from Levi jeans to the fake-wooden panels on station *wagons*. Some of them, like the public paths signposted as "trails", really make life a little smoother beneath a superficial roughness. On the demand side, too, frontier imagery lives on, and not just in "fast draw" shooting clubs and the urban sales of Stetsons, or in the woodcraft courses taught at children's summer camps. When lunch moves outside to the barbecue, it is still very often Dad who takes on the cooking. Men talk of "holding down a job" (instead of a steer). Salesmen (and scholars) speak of "moving into a field." Politicians who feel beleaguered may "put the wagons up around" and let dubious allies "off the reservation." The word "frontier" itself, like "pioneer", seems to have almost infinite diluted uses.

Does any of this affect substantive behaviour? In Viet Nam during the late 1960s, Sir Robert Thompson depicted an American tendency to "confuse a fast reaction with initiative." As if following a Western honour code, a helicopter receiving even a passing shot from a village had to retaliate with firepower upon the village, thus producing for the American image what the Viet Cong wanted. At about the same time, Lyndon Johnson urged American troops to "hang that coonskin on the wall." Later, during the "Vietnamisation" period, when the Americans stepped up their bombing while withdrawing troops, the dean of a foreign affairs graduate school justified the policy with an allusion to the old-time movie gunman who, guns blazing, successfully backs out of a saloon.

The idiom which clothes behaviour does not necessarily cause that behaviour, but it seems fair to suggest that the frontier has supplied an imagery expressive enough to reinforce certain concerns about being tough and "standing up." And one reason why the imagery has been so expressive for Americans is that the real experiences of the frontier happened a *relatively* short time ago and did not occur on overseas soil. Violence and challenging excitement were mixed in with the mundane process of domestic settlement.

Business & Affluence

"JUST LET SOME of the youngsters I know have a chance and they'll give those gentlemen points." So spoke President Woodrow Wilson in declaring battle for what he called "the man on the make" against the restrictive practices of big trust bosses and their political henchmen. The link between American business values and images of dynamic toughness has long been connected with the model of the upwardly mobile, "self-made man." It has likewise been connected with technical innovation, opportunity seeking, and individual expansion—what the *New York Times* (in 1855) termed "the go-aheadativeness of American businessmen."

In the late 19th century, magazine biographies repeatedly expressed fascination with captains of industry. They tended to be portrayed not only as men of grave and masterful judgment, but as powerful physical specimens, radiating what one writer called an "intense animal vitality." On a less dignified plane, American society continued to produce, in both myth and reality, the high-powered huckster, often sallow and dyspeptic but "all go" where business was concerned. "Pile it on and sock it to him!" cried an undertaker to

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Mark Twain in the 1870s, boasting of how he soaked rich and poor alike. The American language itself was already developing the list of softheads who deserved to be taken by smart operators: *sucker, sap, pushover, soft touch, patsy, fall guy.*

By the 1920s, soaring productivity in the making of goods heightened the emphasis on aggressive salesmanship to get rid of them. P. B. Kynes published *The Go-Getter* in 1922, showing how to be one, though a few years before that, Sinclair Lewis had written his immortal *Babbitt*, the caricature of a flabby, would-be-tough realtor, replete with usages like "gotta hustle", "pep", and "punchful prosperity." The emphasis on sales he-manship carried over into evangelism, especially in the case of Billy Sunday. Incorporated with business support as William A. Sunday Inc., Billy attacked excessive preoccupation with wealth (particularly on the part of urban dandies), but stressed even more that Christianity was

> "no dough-faced, lick-spittle proposition. . . . Jesus Christ could go like a six-cylinder engine. . . . Jesus was the greatest scrapper that ever lived."

In the 1930s the expansion of government bureaucracy provoked business attacks on officials who had "never had to meet a payroll", seeming parasites and interfering theorists compared with the practical producers of industry. The belief that government service, by contrast with business, tends to attract the indolent and unfit goes back to Thomas Jefferson and has shown great durability. Well into the 1960s, if not later, there have been many American law practices where to leave for long-time U.S. government service (short stints are another matter) has been viewed as either a sign of ill health or as some other unfitness for the rigours of private competition. Today, "aggressive management" is a favourite guiding term in stock analysts' reports, and when rising executives get together in advanced management courses they are apt to produce language like "a piece of the action", "you're on the firing line", "it's a steal at $100 million", "when the going gets tough", "you shot this rabbit, now you skin it", and so forth. And lest the dynamism wind down, there is still a big publishing trade in "motivational" literature, which largely centres its advice for success on methods of finding self-confidence.

BUSINESS VALUES ON TOUGHNESS and dynamism have been reflected in government and politics. When hard-boiled politicos of the 1880s attacked the genteel, "Good Government" reformers as "Goo-Goos", "man-milliners" and "namby-pamby, goody-goody gentlemen" who "sip cold tea", they were, among other things, defending a spirit of rough party competition, analogous to business competition, against the tidy, civil service rules and examinations with which the reformers wanted to replace the spoils system of corrupt deals and patronage. The reformers, who tended to disdain the hustings and regular party organisation, were called "effeminate" and "political hermaphrodites", men uncertain of their party affiliation as of their sex. The reformers in turn spoke of "fighting the spoils", and their cartoonists depicted clean-cut stalwarts standing against crabbed politicians and paunchy bosses. In the longer run, however, political reformers toughened their image more by getting into party politics and developing the kind of university-trained experts who prided themselves on both their scientific know-how and their unsentimental cost-effectiveness.

But business itself has been associated with individual weakness as well as with strength. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of intellectuals mounted a sort of Puritan gentry attack on excessive commercialism. Connecting physical and mental vigour with high purpose, they feared for the "emasculating" effects of the corruption and physical timidity which they thought commercialism produced. A more general concern has been with the softening effects of business-produced luxury, though this has sometimes overlapped the concern about corruption. It has been less verbalised than the highly political attacks on government welfare for sapping individual "fibre"; but its roots go back in time a long way, at least to 18th-century European associations between luxury and debilitation. In 1819 Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams:

> "Will you tell me how to prevent riches from becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly? . . ."

In May 1974 Richard Nixon declared that world peace depended upon "a strong United States"—

> "strong militarily, strong economically, and strong in the character of its people, a people with a sense of vision, not turning inward and tearing each other apart and not becoming soft as they become rich."

Between the dates of these two statements, many similar ones have been made by public leaders and popular writers. All have expressed anxiety about the betrayal of an older, leaner, tougher America by Americans themselves. The perceived root of the trouble has varied somewhat according to ideology and era—greedy consumption, over-dependence on material goods, "creeping socialism" and "muscle-bound" big government, or the synthetic manners and brittle conformities

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of urban culture. Yet much of this is expressed in what Theodore Roosevelt called "the over-civilised man." At heart it is a concern about softness, weakness and dependency, and it now finds expression in the earnestness with which executives go "jogging", the boom in back-to-nature "backpacking", and the roaring trade in health foods and weight reducers.

A WORD ABOUT the role of machines. A Boston survey in 1971 found that many people approved of technology—including factories, television, computers, and atomic research—yet felt they had become "too dependent on it: this was the most common criticism obtained by the investigators. For men, such ambivalence is not helped by the way some machines are sold and promoted. Cars and their gadgets, for instance, are styled and advertised as dynamic, aggressive extensions of the driver's virility; but in the long run they may make him feel softer. The wish that virility could be servo-assisted is vividly expressed in the juvenile television programme, *Star Trek*, where Captain Kirk and his lithe crew-members of the space-ship, *Enterprise*, crisply command almost magical resources from computer memories, rocket systems, and instant scientific lab work. This picture is far from our image of real space flights. Astronauts must indeed be tough, but they seldom seem to be in charge. They are programmed by NASA computers. What moon man has compared in fame with Charles Lindbergh?

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THE ROUGH RIDER.

With Mr. Punch's best wishes to Colonel Roosevelt, President of the United States.

Punch's congratulations when Colonel Roosevelt became President.

Dudes & Moms

AMERICAN TOUGHNESS STYLES tend to cut across classes and blur class differences. On the one hand they are part of a broader norm against being "stuck up" and affected. On the other, many toughness styles are not sharply proletarian, although some individuals and groups draw on lower-class idiom more than others (and, by contrast with Britain, colloquialisms have flowed up rather than down the class structure). This is largely due to the historic absence of a well-established ruling class with a sense of homogeneous éliteness, extending across the whole land. Again, this makes a particular contrast with Britain where gentlemanly upper and upper-middle classes have been historically associated with military officer traditions and educationally centred on boarding schools which have stressed hardship. Unlike the British upper classes, high-status groups in America have been vulnerable to ridicule as "dudes" (or more modern equivalents implying upper-class effeteness) when they move too far away from common-man styles. In the classic British crime or adventure fiction, a basically tough hero can be uncompromisingly upper-class and even slightly superficially foppish (a Lord Peter Wimsey). In equivalent American fiction, an upper-class hero is more likely to be the *ex*-dude, who reverts to the primitive or makes good in cowboy or other common-man terms—just as Theodore Roosevelt plunged from a genteel background into ranching and vulgar state and local politics, seeking reforms while excoriating many reformers as . . . "dudes." So it is that with many exceptions American leadership styles have tended to emphasise informal and youthful dynamism rather than custodial *gravitas*. Since the decline of the élite Federalist party in the early 19th century—American politicians have talked of *running* rather than *standing* for office; and it is hard to think of a European upper-class counterpart to Nelson Rockefeller's folksy ebullience. (No Briton, one might add, should feel he can sneer at this—our stale-mated society suffers from opposite faults.)

THE FEAR OF "DUDENESS" brings us to the con-

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cern about effeminacy and the historic role of "Mom." This is a difficult and contentious subject, and only the general lines of an argument can be given here. From the 18th century on, foreign observers and native commentators alike have noted the relative importance of American women in everyday life, both in frontier communities and in middle-class city areas. Yet this importance has been largely unofficial and ill-defined. From a lawyer's or anthropologist's standpoint, American society is not a matriarchy or "matrifocal." Within the home, the mother has often been the dominant influence on the children, with a kind of loving control which is not easy to rebel against. The many-folded influence of "Mom" may thus have heightened male anxieties about dependency, effeminacy, and even homosexuality. It is striking that upper-class boarding schools for adolescent boys have had little overt homosexuality, unlike their British counterparts. In sex-segregated conditions, what needs to be explained is not the extent of homosexuality in the one case but the lack of it in the other. The cause may lie in a combination of Mom with the social class factors already referred to: the Americans simply could not afford to have an overtly homosexual phase. It is also striking that in much American popular literature, from Zane Grey to Booth Tarkington's *Penrod*, the heroines are portrayed as bossy or taming, when not downright emasculating, at least until they are shown the realities of a man or boy's world. In comic strips the leading female characters tend either to be bossy and manipulative (from *Blondie* to *Peanuts*' Lucy) or thoroughly subordinate to male action (by a Buzz Sawyer or Rex Morgan, M.D.).

The historical and demographic factors which have produced these realities and images of Mom are too complex to go into here; but it is clear that her influence on American toughness concerns is part of wider cultural forces. As family spender, provider of "all good things", she indulges material dependency and transmits the value on consumption. At the same time she has often joined with the father in pressing the son to "do well" and be sharply male. This has produced a circular process, since sons are apt to become fathers! From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th, literary and sociological observers of American middle-class family life have noted a tendency of the husband to channel enormous emotional energy into his work, sometimes leaving the wife frustrated and all the more intensively focused on the children. Conversely, in times past, a tendency of the husband to leave "culture' to his wife or to (largely women) schoolteachers increased the danger-zones of effeminacy which surrounded the educated male.

Survival

IS THE CONCERN WITH dynamic toughness a declining phenomenon?

In favour of this proposition one might point to the popularising of intellect and the arts among men as well as women; the attraction of anti-heroes (though for every Dustin Hoffman there is a Steve McQueen); some youth styles which reduce differences between male and female; the surfacing of homosexual organisations; the attack by women on male dominance in many jobs; and critiques of the "work ethic" (which has even been called "workaholism") and its push for economic growth.

On the other hand, toughness styles have shown some capacity to infiltrate new forces. In the past century they have moved slowly, unevenly, from a general alignment with anti-intellectualism to celebrations of various kinds of professional intellect, seen as "tough-minded", "analytical", "orchestrating" and so forth. It is a trend not confined to the rise of military "defence intellectuals" and the causes and dimensions of it must make a separate study. To a lesser extent, some counter-cultural groups have also accommodated toughness concerns in their pursuit of proletarian earthiness. Again, career women, whether Liberated or not, still include some "pistol-packin' mommas" who imitate the tough-talk of their male peers; and leisure as well as paid work can support a value on rugged performance. If politicians have been known to talk of "hanging tough", surfers have talked of "hanging ten" (staying on the board with all ten toes) and it has acquired more general uses as a term for doing well in challenging conditions. The American tough-guy persona may yet be slipping, but in various sublimated forms he will hang a good eight for some time to come.

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TELEVISION

Media, Critics & "Medienkritik"

Provincialism Observed—By MARTIN ESSLIN

THAT THE EMERGENCE of the electronic mass media, above all television, is effecting fundamental changes in politics and society is by now a truism of overwhelming obviousness. Yet the debate about the whys, wherefores, and possible corrective measures seems to me barren and unhelpful in the extreme. On the one hand it is being conducted on a strictly practical and pragmatic level ("Is there too much violence on TV?" "Are interviewers too rude or not rude enough?" "Is there too much or too little time devoted to current affairs?")—and, on the other hand, on a level of theoretical abstraction which seems to me to miss many of the fundamental questions altogether. This applies to the prophetic visions of a Marshall McLuhan as much as to the severely "factual" and "scientific" sociological, statistical, semiotic and other studies which are usually conducted in a jargon which seems impenetrable but soon reveals itself as merely a pretentious smokescreen masking banalities.

One of the chief failings of all this discussion, paradoxically in a field supposedly universal and tending to transform the world into a global village, is its parochialism. Vast theoretical structures are built on the strengths or shortcomings of the particular radio or television services in the authors' own countries, world-shaking generalisations are spun out of the personal idiosyncrasies of the presenters of *Panorama* or *News at Ten* in Britain, the twitchings of Walter Cronkite's moustache in New York or the inane gigglings of Johnnie Carson in California. It might, therefore, I thought, be of some interest to look at the discussion about the media in a completely different linguistic and cultural context; and so I have been spending some time reading some of the products of German "*Medienkritik*" of the last few years. And while this made for even more dispiriting reading, it might have had the result of making one look at the familiar arguments from a slightly different standpoint.

IT IS IN THE NATURE of the present intellectual situation in West Germany that the three, fairly typical, products of *Medienkritik* which I used for this purpose are all "Marxist" in approach. It would lead too far, were one to try to account for this vogue of a modish but mostly misunderstood Marxism among German intellectuals in detail. It could be the effect of the intense, and wholly laudable, *Nachholbedürfnis* (need to catch up) which has dominated German cultural life in the last thirty years and has now led to German intellectuals reaching the point which the Auden-Isherwood-Spanish-Civil-War generation in England had reached about 1936. Or it might be due to the fact that the only towering intellectual giants writing in German in a period when intellectual life inside Germany had ceased altogether were Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin, while among the returning intellectuals after the War, Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno were the most prominent—all Marxists to a man. Or, possibly, the ugliness of the money-grabbing *nouveaux-riches* who emerged as the ruling class of West Germany through the *Wirtschaftswunder* has once more alienated the intellectuals into a stance of total opposition to the *status quo*. In any event "Marxism" in a bewildering variety of shades and colours is still the prevailing orthodoxy among intellectuals in West Germany.

The electronic media are the most attractive and promising field of employment for young intellectuals; hence, among the younger practitioners in radio and television (as in the theatre, in publishing and in the press) "Marxists" abound. No wonder that frequently the tensions between these young Turks and the establishment of the media, much more directly under the control of the major political parties than in

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Britain, erupt in various crises and conflicts. That is why the call for a reform of the media is more stridently voiced in the West German Federal Republic than elsewhere. The *Medienkritik* by sociologists and publicists is largely motivated by such demands.

> In the class society in an age of mass-communications the rulers are not content with exploiting the dependent classes. In addition they systematically dominate their consciousness. A critique of television has to proceed within the framework of this insight. It has to start from the recognition that neither the communicator, nor the medium itself, nor the recipient of its message can be the centre of analysis. The process of mental pauperisation can only be understood in the context of the processes of social production, socialisation and communication. Only thus will the specific function of television in the final phase of capitalism become visible. For a large part of the population the mass media do not serve as an instrument of communication. In the way they are used they are comparable with Aladdin's lamp and are a remedy against anxiety and frustration, an instrument to procure surrogates for satisfaction and sedation. In such a mental climate spurious information and panic lie close together. We shall show that in German television the invasion from Mars is taking place every evening and that what happened in 1938 is an exception only because then people rushed, panic-stricken into the streets; while today it is the perverse rule that all that is silently accepted.

That is the thesis propounded by Goetz Dahlmueller, Wulf D. Hund, and Helmut Kommer in a massive volume.[1] This "handbook against manipulation" is a product of strict party-line "Marxism" of the most old-fashioned type of oversimplified *Vulgärmarxismus*. The content of its 386 pages, for all its prolixity of detail and all its hypertrophy of inflated jargon, could easily be accommodated on a postage stamp. It amounts to no more than saying that in a capitalist society *all* institutions are geared to the oppression of the working class, and that you will not get decent television unless capitalism is overthrown. There is a curious inner contradiction in writing a long book criticising details of television on these lines. For if one believes the thesis there is no point in detailed criticism. Even the infiltration of the media by revolutionaries would be ineffective so long as the structure of control by the oppressive capitalist institutions is, as the authors postulate, quite incapable of tolerating anything which does not expressly serve the purpose of deceiving and mentally pauperising the masses. Even the occasional left-wing programme, which gets by, can (and the authors argue this quite specifically) be taken as a particularly Machiavellian device by which the oppressors manage to create the illusion that there is, after all, such a thing as freedom of speech in their system. And wouldn't *that*, by weakening revolutionary fervour, be the cruellest cut, the most dastardly, oppressive, manipulative device of all?

THE MOST OUTLANDISH aspect of this curious book is its total unawareness of the fact that television also exists in the *non-capitalist world.* Surely this is a circumstance which to anyone with a truly scientific mind would suggest a wide field of empirical confirmation of the theoretical postulates developed in the authors' argumentation. Take their demonstration that the transmission of football matches is a particularly wicked capitalist manipulative device:

> What, quite rightly fascinates the audience here is the dialectic between the individual and the collective in the game. The skill and dexterity of the individual players and the manner of their co-operation in the strategy of football, united in a common will, is indeed a fascinating event: above all, *because the individual citizen hardly or never experiences anything like it in his social reality.* [My italics. M.E.]
>
> As a producer of social wealth he is isolated, as the mere bearer of a function separated from the collective work-process, abstractly determined by capitalist exploitative interests. The aggressions and tensions which arise everywhere, where isolated producers meet, the low degree of solidarity of which they are capable owing to the fact that their individual striving and their true interests are in contradiction with each other, the absence of any real relationship, as producers, to the goods they produce and their utilisation—all this seems as though it was wiped out, when they take in a football match. Here everything that does not work in the reality of society seems to function well: the solidarity of the teams, the insightful relationship of the individual to the collective, the insightful relation of all of them towards the common aim of their efforts, etc.
>
> Up to this point the football match would be an illusionistic vision of social harmony, if it were not for the opposing team. Through it alone does that tension enter the picture which makes it so valuable for the mass media, for it is through it that the game acquires its character of alternate cold and hot baths, which constitutes the insidious canalisation of tensions which sport provides. The situation of the teams is determined by the fight they wage against each other and their aims are antagonistic, unrelated to any aim of a higher order, but merely towards victory over the adversary. In this respect football is a reflection of social antagonisms: the interests of the capitalists are incompatible with those of the wage-slaves, the interests of profit-maximisation are incompatible with the need for optimal satisfaction of societal needs.
>
> It is this double-bottomed quality above all, its ability on the one hand to reflect social antagonisms, and on the other, to create the semblance of non-alienated labour, which makes professional sport so suitable for canalising social tensions . . . .

[1] Goetz Dahlmueller, Wulf D. Hund and Helmut Kommer, *Kritik des Fernsehens, Handbuch gegen Manipulation* (Luchterhand, 1973).

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And so on and on for another page. Quite apart from the piquancy of the particular jargon it provides (which may excuse the inordinate length of the quotation) this example poses, surely, a very simple question. If the authors succeed in convincing us that the televising of football matches is an insidious device by which the workers are being relieved of the otherwise unbearable tensions created by the alienated nature of their daily work, what then, pray, is the reason why the same football matches (in the case of, say, the World Cup) are also broadcast in the non-capitalist world and are, moreover, by general consensus, among the most popular broadcasts in those countries? And if, in those happy lands, social antagonisms no longer exist and the fact that the workers can clearly see the purpose and social relevance of their daily toil relieves them of frustration, why do they still revel in the antagonism of opposing teams, which to them must appear as quite unnecessary canalisations of tensions under which they no longer suffer?

A critique of the media so blinkered, so totally devoid of a sense of reality, is no more than an emotional release of the authors' own tensions and frustrations.

HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER, a poet and essayist of considerable stature, and a far more substantial spokesman of the West German New Left, recognises this state of affairs, when he remarks in his essay *Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien* (A Do-it-yourself-kit towards a Theory of the Media):

> The manipulation theory of the Left is basically defensive, and must eventually lead to defeatism. This turn towards the defensive is grounded, subjectively, on a feeling of impotence. Objectively it is correlated to the entirely correct recognition of the fact that the all-important means of production are in the hands of the adversary. But to respond to such a state of affairs with moral indignation is naive.

Enzensberger's essay appears in a volume containing a selection of his writings in English translation[2] which, however, is barely readable, as the translations of most of the essays in it can only be understood by readers who know enough German to refer to the original texts and make out what the translator wants to say.[3] Enzensberger's main point, in dealing with the electronic mass media, is a plea not to shy away from manipulation. If the ruling class uses the mass media to manipulate the masses and their

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[2] *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics and the Media.* By HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER. Selected and translated with a Postscript by MICHAEL ROLOFF. The Seabury Press, $6.95. This volume contains a selection of essays scattered in three volumes published in Germany by Suhrkamp Verlag of Frankfurt: *Einzelheiten* I, 1962. *Einzelheiten* II, 1963: *Palaver*, 1974.

[3] Here are just a few examples picked out at random.

"So now we can hear it again, the little death nell for literature" (p.83). Who, we might well ask is Little Death Nell—a new heroine from Dickens, or a misprint for "the death of Little Nell"? So we look up the original (p. 41 of Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Palaver*, Suhrkamp, 1974) where this essay, *Gemeinplätze die neueste Literatur betreffend*, is reprinted) and we find: "*Jetzt also hören wir es wieder laüten, das Sterbeglöcklein für die Literatur.*" And now we realise: not a Little Nell, but a little *k*nell is meant. But what would a *little* knell be? The translator doesn't realise that a *Sterbeglöcklein* is a little bell, which tolls a knell; but a knell can be neither little nor large, merely soft or loud. A bell is a bell, but a knell is the sound produced by ringing that bell. Elementary, my dear Watson.

In the same essay Enzensberger describes how some artists nowadays are resolved to make an end of art.

"The literati are celebrating the end of literature . . . *The sculptors produce plastic coffins for their plastics*" (my italics. M.E.). Now what would that mean? No one who doesn't know German will ever discover the answer. To know what that sentence means one must know that in German *Plastik* means a sculpture, or the Art of Sculpture. So the sentence: *Die Bildhauer stellen Plastiksärge her für die Plastik* means: "The sculptures are making plastic coffins for the art of sculpture"! A nice little translator's carve-up; in French it might even go like a bomb.

Another example, a few lines on: "Almost everyone longs for certainty; and if indeed it is all over and done with for writing, the fact evidently would be a soporific." The reader is puzzled (or at least this reader was). So he proceeds to the German original: "*Nach Gewissheit verlangt es die meisten, und wäre es die, dass es aus und vorbei sei mit dem Schreiben. Auch das wäre offenbar noch eine Art von Beruhigung.*" Which means: "Most people long for certainty, even if it were no more than the certainty that literature is finished. Even such a certainty would obviously bring a measure of relief." The translator here, apart from missing the movement of the thought, has simply mixed up *Beruhigung* (relief, something which restores one's calm) with *Beruhigungsmittel* (a medicine which calms the nerves, or more commonly puts one to sleep).

And a final example, a few paragraphs on: "Since literature is made by the few for the few, it takes little to disturb this equilibrium." I could not follow the logic of this argument. So I went to the German. What does it say: *Da (die Literatur) von wenigen für wenige gemacht wird, genügen wenige um sie aus dem Gleichgewicht zu bringen.*" Which is much more logical, for it means, in fact: "As literature is made by few people for few people, a few people are sufficient to throw it out of balance."

And so on and so on. The trouble with the critique of translation is that it is not only boring, but totally meaningless for readers who are not familiar with *both* languages involved. That, alas, is why bad translations are rarely detected by English readers, and even more rarely castigated in the manner they deserve. Only translations so monumentally bad (like the above) that they become incomprehensible are even noticed.

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consciousness, surely, he argues, the Left should do likewise rather than throw up its hands in moral horror. He wants them to mobilise the masses towards a new and revolutionary use of the media. How is this to happen?

As neither Marx nor Engels knew the electronic mass media and as a reference to sacred texts seems essential for adherents of a pseudo-theology like "Marxism", some casual remarks which Brecht made about radio between 1927 and 1932, amounting to no more than some twelve pages in his collected works, have been elevated to the status of scripture. Brecht's main point was that radio should become more than merely a one-way means of communication; he wanted it to be used to enable the masses to get a hearing. This postulate has, in fact, been more than realised by the mounting volume of phone-in programmes in the United States and Europe as well as through the copious use of the *vox-populi* type of interviewing on television and radio.

Enzensberger goes much further. He points out that, technically, every transistor radio is a potential radio transmitter and could be turned into one by a small modification. This may be true. But—and here again one is struck by the remoteness from reality which characterises such "revolutionary" musings—on what wave-lengths would the millionfold transmissions of millions of individuals broadcasting on their transistor-transmitters be accommodated? And, indeed, who would want, or have the time, to hear what such immense numbers of individuals had to say? And would they *have* anything to say at all? In the far more important field of television even Enzensberger has to admit that this is a medium incapable of being used by each individual in a population. And so, after an opening of great pretence to originality and world-shaking, fundamental re-thinking, Enzensberger's do-it-yourself kit for a new theory of the media comes down to a demand for the organisation of cultural collectives which should devote themselves to the production of programmes which, somehow or other, would be offered to the establishment-run media. This is no more and no less than a plea for "access to the media", a demand which in recent years has been increasingly met in Britain and which in the United States is already embodied in the rules governing the running of local radio and television stations.

Access broadcasting of this kind does result in a wide variety of programmes produced by pressure groups and collectives of various kinds. But, in practice, the experience with access broadcasting highlights the basic dilemma which underlies Enzensberger's position. The views of minority groups will of necessity only appeal to a minority of listeners and viewers. Even if it were technically possible to accommodate multitudes of such minority broadcasts on the wavebands (or perhaps the far more numerous channels available in a cable-service), this would lead, at best, to a fragmentation of the audience. It could diminish the mass appeal of the media and produce a veritable Babel of more or less relevant voices. At best, that is. What is much more likely is that highly professional and polished entertainment and news programmes coming from the traditional sources would continue to command the allegiance of the vast majority of listeners and viewers, while the numerous "access" broadcasters would be crying in the wilderness.

Again, the impenetrable parochialism of this kind of universalist theorising seems remarkable. Enzensberger need only have looked across the north-western borders of the Federal Republic to see the system he advocates in full operation in Holland. There both radio and television transmitters are put at the disposal of any political or other group which can command the support of more than a certain number of listeners or viewers. The system works; but it works not much better, and perhaps a little worse, than elsewhere; it is significant that recent developments there point towards ever-increasing support for non-political, entertainment-oriented listener and-viewer associations at the expense of the more ideologically committed ones.

WHAT ENZENSBERGER'S DEMANDS ultimately amount to is the wish to transform *mass* media into the equivalent of small-circulation poetry magazines or intellectual quarterlies with which a poet and highbrow pundit like Enzensberger is happiest and most familiar. But the mass media, alas, are and will remain media for the masses. Frank Boeckelmann, a sociologist close to the Frankfurt school, is trying to come to grips with that aspect of the problem.[4] Although written in the obscurantist, pseudo-philosophical jargon so beloved by those masters of the Frankfurt school, Adorno and Horkheimer, Boeckelmann's book contains much good sense and a number of valuable insights.

Boeckelmann's starting point is Professor Jürgen Habermas' concept of the structural transformation of the "public domain"—the dissolution of the 19th-century liberal concept of a private and a public sphere, which neatly separated the state from society. In the public domain or the political arena, responsible

[4] *Theorie der Massenkommunikation.* By FRANK BOECKELMANN. Suhrkamp Verlag (1975).

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citizens met to debate and give form and shape to public opinion. With the increasing intermingling of the public and private sphere (where, for instance, the Welfare State has taken over many of the functions previously exercised within the privacy of the family), public opinion has become more and more institutionalised. It is no longer the product of genuine debate among individuals, formed, as it were from below, but is imposed from above by the spokesmen of pressure groups (political parties, trade unions, etc). Deprived of any real influence on the formation of public opinion the individual becomes merely a passive recipient of ready-made standpoints between which, at best, he has a choice.

In attempting to fit the mass media into this theoretical framework Boeckelmann rightly points out that by far their most important function, far more important than the actual treatment of what they are putting out, is the process of *selection of the themes* which are to be dealt with. By concentrating on some groups of subject and excluding others from the vast number of potential topics, the mass media (the press, radio and television) tend to create an institutionally-sanctioned *artificial reality*, a synthetic mental environment for the masses. The themes selected must be able to arouse interest and hold the attention of the public. Boeckelmann lists some of the formal and presentational criteria which are used to arouse attention: personalisation of the subject matter; concentration on success and achievement; novelty; aggressiveness; stress on the advantages of normality as against the penalties of abnormality; the appeal of wealth; the appeal of the exotic, bizarre and unusual; *etc.*

In a long section of his book Boeckelmann tries to assess the *impact* of the mass media and comes to the conclusion that it is wrong to talk about direct *effects* of the mass media on their audience by, for example, establishing a causal relationship between violence on the media and increased crime in society. Here he touches the central problem of any rational approach to the study of the influence of the mass media and any practical understanding of the ways in which they can be controlled and made to serve society in a positive and constructive manner. Yet, as seems inevitable in a writer so wrapped up in narrow sectarian prejudice and so remote from experience in the actual working of the media, his belief that the selection of topics for the media could be fairly easily improved if it were made by more enlightened individuals is of disarming naivety. He submits a long list of "neglected" themes which should be treated by the media, and it ranges from "housing problems", "the life of old people" etc., to "history of the working class movement." Again, the habitual parochialism in the approach of a "social scientist" is most striking. Whether these topics are neglected in West Germany or not, in many other equally capitalistic, equally "class-dominated" countries like Britain, Sweden, Italy, Austria, Finland, (to name but a few of whose production I have some first-hand knowledge) they are among the most frequent subjects dealt with in news, features, and drama.

THE SELECTION OF THEMES in the mass media may be dull, unskilful and even injurious to the cultural well-being of a society. But is it as arbitrary as it may appear to a naive observer? This question cannot be answered by simply looking at the media in isolation. It amounts to more; no less than raising the far larger question of what constitutes the content of a society's collective consciousness, its general framework of knowledge, values, interests. It is not enough to deplore the fact that people are more interested in personalised than abstract news, that their attention is more easily aroused by sex and violence than by aesthetic or intellectual values. One must also ask *why* this is so. A critique of the mass media in any given society must, therefore, be firmly anchored in a consideration of its general cultural level, and of the structures of the emotions and aspirations which lie beneath the surface of its educational institutions. *Why* is it that violence has such a powerful pulling power? *Why* is it that audiences are quite clearly unable to take arguments above a certain level of abstraction? Is it due to purely environmental factors (*e.g.*, a low educational level)? Or are there genetic limitations to the number of individuals in any society who have the ability to think abstractly, or would *not* be more easily aroused by sex and violence than by fine musical counterpoint or brilliant philosophical argument?

Yet, these questions probably being beyond a satisfactory answer at present, and things being as they are, are the topics dealt with in the mass media really selected arbitrarily by the individuals who are presumed to be running them? It seems astonishing that sociologists like Boeckelmann pay little attention to the processes by which topics rise to the surface in a society like his own, let alone in societies organised on a different pattern like those of the Soviet Union or China. In a society with a free press, for example, the competition among newspapers alone will ensure that there can be no question of topics for discussion being arbitrarily chosen by a small clique of manipulators. The criteria by which the inclusion of items in television and radio news-bulletins is determined may be—and indeed often are—unimaginative and wilful. But the decisive factor in their selection is not the arbitrary

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whim of a manipulator but a fairly general consensus on what constitutes "news values" in the society in question. And this consensus is based not on some fossilised dogma but on the continuous experience of all engaged in the process. New subjects, ignored by the establishment, continuously seep in from the fringe. Provided the society is free enough to voice minority views, there will be a continuous dialectic between established values and the onrush of views and interests from the fringe of the established sector. The rise of the so-called underground press in the United States and Europe is a case in point. Hitherto taboo subjects were quickly absorbed from it into the established press and acquired "news value", and indeed so were the individual journalistic talents the underground threw up. And who, in the age of urban guerrilla warfare and anarcho-terrorism, would deny that groups outside the establishment have the means by which their concerns, the burning themes they want to endow with news value, can be injected into the store of media topics?

THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS operate in the selection of subjects for non-news programmes. The equivalent to the Underground Press in the Western world is the Fringe Theatre. Here, too, a continuous process of absorption of topics, writers, actors and directors is at work. What was off-off-Broadway one day may well be on Broadway the next and actually dominate television and radio the day after. This is true of new trends in pop music as well as in serious drama. In Britain the speed with which the writers, directors and actors of the fringe theatre are taken up by television is remarkable. One need only think of playwrights like John McGrath, David Edgar, Howard Brenton, David Hare, Howard Barker, whose work for television is not a whit more "establishment-minded" than anything they may have written for the fringe. Nor is this merely so in the "serious" sector of drama. One has only to think of how an anti-establishment fringe author like Johnny Speaight came to the fore in the most popular area of mass entertainment with a series like *Till Death Us Do Part* in Britain, and then even had his basic—and by no means unsubversive idea—transferred to the United States and adapted to conditions there (as *All in the Family*) and then translated, for better or worse, into problem-laden German for television and the stage, to see that the "circulation of the fringe élite" even imposes themes across national frontiers.

IN AN OPEN SOCIETY where individuals and small groups retain the possibility of publishing their ideas in little magazines or underground papers, where fringe theatre can still be produced without major capital investment, the system by which topics are selected for the media is, by and large, self-correcting. "News values" and the themes which absorb the public's attention may be perverse, trivial, or obtuse; but they will, taken over all, be a mirror of the society's collective mind. For those who run the mass media, even though they might themselves believe that they are manipulators of the public consciousness, are themselves only exponents of that consciousness (the less outstanding their intelligence and the more average their background and education, the more this holds good). They are subject to the same fluctuations of its interests and preoccupations. They are also, because they want to succeed in holding their audience's attention, under immense pressure to respond to its demands. If they fail, they are bound to lose touch and to diminish their own influence. Ironically, the best evidence for this comes from the totalitarian countries, where the mass media are indeed rigidly manipulated from above and where the emergence of new topics is much more difficult. As the gap between the social reality in the audience's daily lives and that presented by the media widens, their impact also is reduced.

When I visited Georg Lukács in Budapest shortly before he died, he passionately condemned the vicious manipulation of the masses in the West. When I interjected that after all the ceaseless outpourings of propaganda from radio and television in the Eastern countries must also be regarded as a form of mass-manipulation, he dismissed this argument with the casual remark: "That propaganda is utterly harmless because nobody believes a word of it! . . . " And, indeed, in a society where crime or accidents are not reported, where the audience finds that life's daily vexations are completely ignored by the media, their credibility and influence must be greatly reduced. The massive jamming of foreign broadcasts by the Soviet authorities, however, shows that the demand to hear about the topics not selected by the manipulators persists. So does the incessant striving to get the suppressed topics out into the open, whether in *samizdat* publications or in novels and plays written in what Lukács called "Aesopian language."

That the selection of themes in an open society ultimately constitutes a self-correcting system does not mean that the situation could not be improved. It could, indeed, be argued that *more* rather than less manipulation would be needed to improve it. In the United States, where radio and television are largely in the hands of the advertising industry, the service provided is highly unsatisfactory—not because it is undemocratic but because it is far *too* democratic. What market

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research establishes as the "most popular" material so dominates the TV channels that the needs of important, but numerically small, minorities are not met at all by the commercial operators, and only marginally by the under-capitalised "public service" network. And while a commercial system *does* assimilate new material, even if it originates from strictly anti-establishment sources, this happens only if (like a new wave of popular music) it is likely to appeal to a vast majority. In Europe the public service, or mixed-economy, patterns of control of the mass media *can* result in a conscious effort to meet the needs of minorities as well. Moreover, by not being under a constant compulsion to please the largest possible number, they can experiment with different topics and forms and thus, perhaps, create new demands. There can, after all, be no demand for something which is not as yet known. The dramatic rise in the demand for classical music and serious drama in Britain (still only that of a minority, but one which has grown spectacularly over the last half-century) is a case in point.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SYSTEMS by which the mass media are operated and above all by which the selectors of the material for the mass media are themselves selected thus remains an important problem. That the excessive influence of political parties in the governing bodies of the broadcasting organisations of West Germany and Italy is a source of considerable weakness is only too obvious. More than that, all "public service" organisations are prone to become self-perpetuating oligarchies. In a period when parliamentary institutions are rapidly losing their prestige and influence, is the arena of politics itself being usurped by the mass media? And does this give the controllers of the media an undue influence?

A continuous discussion of these matters in the media themselves and in the press is, clearly, of the utmost importance. In view of the fact that the media are themselves dependent on the general cultural and educational climate of a society, it is equally imperative that the gap which at present exists between the media and education should be filled. Not only do children tend to learn more from television than they ever learn at school; the lessons they absorb from these two sources are frequently in direct contradiction. The educational system should, as a matter of the highest priority, teach its pupils the art of watching and interpreting the media, developing a critical sense, and thus immunise them against the worst abuses of addiction to television.

ALL THIS, OF COURSE, PRESUPPOSES that the media are effective in dominating the mind of society. But there is an immense amount of confusion as to how and to what extent such a domination actually occurs. Political parties and anti-porn-crusaders seem to believe in an immediate short-term impact of anything that is said on the media. In fact, experience tends to show that this kind of impact is minimal. In populations exposed to innumerable news broadcasts, only a tiny minority can ever be relied upon to know the names of even a few of the important politicians, regular "talking heads" on the home screen. The extensive exposure of the pros and cons of the Common Market during the Referendum campaign in Britain signally failed to create genuine understanding of even the most simple basic facts among the vast majority of the British public. This may be due to the fact that the visual image of television communicates personality and external appearance more effectively than concepts verbally communicated. It could also be that the circumstances under which television is received do not favour concentration but induce an almost semi-conscious state of relaxed half-attention. Yet television commercials have an immediate, and statistically measurable, direct short-term impact on the sales of the products they advertise. But these are visual and often musical rather than mainly verbal. They are very short, are frequently repeated, and contain slogans and jingles which stick in the memory through rhythm and rhyme rather than rational argument.

FOR THE SHORT-TERM COMMUNICATION of *messages* television seems a fairly inefficient medium. Marshall McLuhan's slogan that the medium *is* the message, although overstated as behoves the prophetic stance of that great stimulator of ideas, comes far nearer to the true state of affairs. What television brings about, above all, is a fundamental change in the lifestyle and habits of its audience. Beyond that there is only a slow and gradual change in attitudes and the general content of their consciousness. It is precisely the passive, semi-alert state of mind in which television is watched which ensures that non-verbal contents—images—which consciousness itself perhaps never knowingly perceived are subliminally absorbed. And these are more powerful than the much more obvious surface content of a news-bulletin or play.

It is this, incidentally, which makes conscious manipulation of populations by television so difficult. The makers of the programme themselves will largely be unaware of the aspects of their work which will have such subliminal impacts. They may thus transmit their own subconscious impulses far more efficiently than

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their conscious intentions. For example: the news-reader who is earnestly striving to make the White Paper he is talking about as lucid and comprehensible as possible may merely be transmitting his taste in ties or hair-styles to the audience. Or, over a long period of time, the only lasting effect of months and months of watching and listening to the media may be the adoption of a new habit of speech which will remain operative in the audience long after the conceptual content of what they heard is evaporated and forgotten. The "manipulators" are thus, to a large extent, unaware of what they are actually achieving, and they are quite unable to control it.

In itself, this is nothing new. The spirit of an age, as embodied in its literature, painting, or architecture, discloses only to later generations what it was really about. *We* can see what motivated styles like the Gothic or Baroque, literary movements like Romanticism or Expressionism and what it *really* was that they tended to express, while the artists (and their audiences) concerned remained unaware of the deeper, subconscious implications of their work. If Siegfried Kracauer in his famous book *From Caligari to Hitler* was able to isolate the roots of future Nazi violence in the early German cinema, the films of the 1920s (even those produced by completely unpolitical, or anti-Fascist, directors and writers), this was due to the fact that these films expressed the subconscious attitudes of the producers as well as the audiences. Ultimately the producers and the audiences belong to the same cultural milieu and respond to the same impulses. The idea that there is a rigid dividing-line between the "manipulators" and the audiences of the mass media, with wholly conscious operators working on the wholly passive minds of helpless victims, is a fallacy. If, as the "access" programmes show, the recipients of the Message change places with those who usually transmit it, the difference in basic approach is minimal. What is noticeable is merely the difference in professional skill.

IN AN OPEN SOCIETY, therefore, the mass media must be seen as intimately and indissolubly linked with the general fabric of society, its psychological cravings, subconscious wishes, its interests and instinctive drives as well as the conceptual content of its culture, the topics it discusses, the matters it wants to know about. The truly dangerous aspect of the electronic mass media is the fact that their technology—the scarcity of wave-lengths, the vast cost of production of television programmes—limits the number of outlets and thus compels monopolistic or oligopolistic forms of organisation. In the present state of technology there is no easy way round this situation. But it is clear that the less totalitarian the system of control and organisation of the media, the better it ensures their receptivity to the true tendencies and movements of society's conscious and subconscious states of mind—and the more acceptable they will be. Nor must it ever be forgotten that a free movement of ideas and artistic impulses outside the field of the media is essential for the well-being and healthy functioning of the media themselves. In a totalitarian society they will, of necessity, be out of touch with social reality. In an open society the public will get the media it deserves; but, at least, in getting no better than it deserves it will be able to become more conscious of its own shortcomings and enable individuals who respond to these shortcomings to contribute to their exposure and eventual transcendence. In that sense the media—in an open society in which they are rationally and flexibly organised—can, in the long run perhaps, raise the level of self-awareness of that society, and gradually contribute to an improvement in the quality of life it offers.

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NOTES & TOPICS

"Suicide of a Nation?"

Towards a Great Debate

By John Vaizey

WHAT *is* wrong with us? I put the emphasis on the verb because the question has a potency now that it lacked when it merely had potential. When *Suicide of a Nation?*,[1] edited by Arthur Koestler, came out in a special number of ENCOUNTER (July 1963), the signs of the disaster ahead were but dimly foreseen. We who wrote in that issue were thought of as alarmists and visionaries.

The fate that we predicted turns out to be by slow starvation rather than by something quicker and more immediately effective. Or am I once more being needlessly alarmist?

The essays published 13 years ago made a series of points, some of them mutually contradictory. But for the most part they are disturbingly familiar. Arthur Koestler made the ritual obeisance to the lion-like qualities shown in a British crisis; otherwise, he said, we were ostrich-like. Our share of world trade declined; output did not rise; we were overtaken in productivity by country after country; and this general economic distress—though he disliked leaning on economics so heavily—was evidence of our main, indeed our central, failure of will. The failure was *functional* not *structural*. By this Arthur Koestler meant that it was a failure of the will, rather than of the structure of our society, which had led us to such a pass, though it was connected with the class system and our historic attachment to it.

Life has, of course, rolled on and brought with it President Kennedy's assassination, Viet Nam, the May '68 riots, the emergence of Mao's China, and the new Great Inflation. A mere list of these events is sufficient to chasten the most ardent forecaster. But the one constant element in the world's flux has been Britain's decline.

THE MOST RADICAL VOICE (in that context) was that of the political commentator, Henry Fairlie, who took the conservative position that there was not much that was wrong with Britain, certainly compared with Adenauer's post-war Germany and Gaullist France—that our institutions would survive, indeed were specifically designed to survive, a crisis, and that what was called decline was merely life itself—muddled, glorious, shaming, but rough-textured in its qualities. Perhaps Fairlie's position was the only respectable or daunting one. Faced with a crowd of engineers, he threw a spanner in the works and said "social engineering is death."

Unfortunately, right though Henry Fairlie may have been in principle (I note that he has now changed his mind[2]), he was sadly wrong in fact. Our institutions have not survived the crisis. A Civil Service/Trade Union junta rules us. And we are notably and perceptibly badly off—our national income is only two-fifths that of Germany—and almost all the signs are of advancing decay. Henry Fairlie now refers to our low sights and our modest objectives as a sign of this decay.

These signs were abundantly there in 1962–3 when we wrote our essays. The question that must be asked is whether our diagnosis was correct and whether our remedies, if tried, would have cured the disease.

MOST OF THE AUTHORS concerned drew attention to the extraordinary class divisions in Britain which were constantly talked about and which appeared to have remained more permanent and solid—in England particularly—than they had elsewhere. This was true about the verbalisations, but untrue about the actual existence of the divide. Such international comparisons as there have been in this exceedingly difficult field of social investigation have suggested that Britain is no more class-divided than most other comparable countries; and, according to some criteria (for example, social mobility) it has been less class-divided than other nations. Certainly nothing like the chasm that runs between White and Black in the United States has ever been seen in Britain.

Nevertheless, the absence of a revolution for over three centuries in modern history has, I suspect, led to an apparent persistence of class divisions which other countries assume to have been disrupted by violence of the kind which characterised France after 1789 and after 1870. It certainly is true that the arguments about the future of British industry and the whole question

[1] Reprinted in book form by Hutchinson (London, 1963) and translated into various languages thereafter. See, also, Arthur Koestler's own reconsideration in ENCOUNTER (October 1973), "The Lion & the Ostrich."

[2] Henry Fairlie, "Transatlantic Letter to England", ENCOUNTER, January 1976.

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of incomes policy are couched in terms of class war here, when class is as unmentionable a word abroad (especially in America) as overt racism would be unacceptable here in conversation.

The extraordinary fact, however, of the past ten years or so has not been the rise in working-class confidence (that has been marked at least at the Trade Union level) but the decline of managerial self-confidence. Though the quality of British management measured by its technical expertise has probably never been so high, its self-confidence has certainly never been so low, and most of the diseases of British business, from under-selling to over-manning, from incapacity to hold to deadlines to inability to ensure that fixed price contracts can be kept to, are due directly to a failure of management; and this failure of management spreads right back into the universities and colleges, so that only the less bright students are generally willing to go into British business and industry. The question of whether this can be called functional or structural will be returned to.

THE ONE FACTOR which linked all the contributions to *Suicide of a Nation?* was their attack on the class-ridden nature of the British education system and the desirability of its reform on total comprehensive lines. Again, as I pointed out in my own contribution, there was little evidence that other countries had been more successful in developing a class-free education system, and there is now substantial evidence that the British system is perhaps slightly more egalitarian (in some respects) than those of most other countries, including countries behind the Iron Curtain. But certainly the massive increase in educational expenditure which was under way when *Suicide of a Nation?* was written reached a culmination (ironically under Mrs Margaret Thatcher) which means that a very high proportion of the national income is being spent upon education. I am not one of those who think that the money is wholly wasted, but manifestly a great deal of it is. I asked in my article for a radical reduction in the size of school classes and for raising the school-leaving age. Both of these things have now happened. In many local authority schools the classes are now smaller than those in independent private schools. What we have not allowed for is the gross demoralisation of the teachers as they seized the half-baked theories of "free and spontaneous" child development which had been evolved in so-called progressive circles in the United States and in our own primary schools and applied them to the British education system wholesale.

This now means that semi-literates are producing illiterates. Over two million British adults cannot read. This is a terrifying situation and one which must be confronted.

But it is fairly clear, first, that it is not unique to Britain, because by any criterion the Americans seem to be rather worse educated than we are; and, secondly, that it has in the last analysis very little to do with the case. Western Germany was extremely successful in transforming its society *without* increasing its expenditure on education at all. So education which seemed at the time to be a panacea is certainly not. I am, however, one of those who regret the missed opportunity. I believe that if the Harold Wilson government of 1964 had had the courage to suggest, and then to enact, that every child must go to its local school together with the complete abolition of selection and of the major private schools, the middle class would have settled down (after a bout of cheerless grumbling) to accept a situation which would have redounded enormously to its advantage. And I think that the involvement of Britain's middle classes in the state school system would not have allowed the demoralisation such as we have seen at the William Tyndale Junior school in London recently.[3] Those resilient middle classes would have as successfully raided the national education budget as they have made use of the National Health Service.

ONE AREA WHERE A CORRECT DIAGNOSIS was made was of the inadequacies of the Civil Service. These inadequacies were pinpointed chiefly as "amateurism" which had been perpetuated by the élitism of the civil servant. But as the Civil Service has become more "democratic" it has become less efficient. The fact that the newspapers are now saying in every leading article that at least the Civil Service is not corrupt is surely evidence of the fact that it is very deeply and profoundly corrupt in almost every other sense of the word. In any case it now spends its

[3] For details on the "extremist take-over" of this school in a working-class London area, see the weekly accounts of the official inquiry in *The Times Educational Supplement* in November and December 1975.

When the scandal of the new so-called "progressive" teaching methods first broke, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the headmaster—faced by hundreds of withdrawals by parents of their "illiterate" children—reaffirmed that he saw no point in teaching children to write inasmuch as the invention of the typewriter had made penmanship superfluous. More than that, the names of the children whose parents were seeking their transfer to nearby schools (more attentive to basic reading and writing, and ordinary classroom order), were evidently put on a "black-list" in order to make further defections impractical. In fact, some Tyndale pupils—whether as an extra-curricular exercise in spontaneity or in militant tactics—were accused of "terrorizing" a nearby infants' school ("roaming at will" without being reprimanded, etc.).

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entire time justifying its own existence by writing formal internal memoranda. The time has come drastically to prune the Civil Service, and this will require a radical rethinking of the structure and purposes of government in modern society. The West Germans manage with a much smaller central bureaucracy than we do, and it is to their post-War social forms that we must once more look. Instead, with some degree of horror, one suspects that the cheerful anarchy of the European headquarters of Brussels will eventually succumb to the Gladstonian ethos of the British Civil Service, and then heaven help the Common Market.

It remains, true, however, that far too little real expertise reposes in the Civil Service, and that they have continued their appalling habit of moving people about as soon as they begin to know something about their subjects. Government judgment is entirely Civil Service judgment, and it has been successfully masquerading itself although its record is something between bad and disastrous over these past fifty years.

WE WERE QUITE INCORRECT, as I now think, in saying that the British disease was *functional* and not *structural* in one vital area. This structural weakness was the unwillingness of the British to adopt some kind of central plan which would pour investment effort and prestige into the major growth industries. As a result British industry is grossly handicapped in world markets (as is witnessed by the fall in the share of exports which had for many years gone to British manufacturers rather than to those elsewhere). This radical restructuring of the British economy is going to be more painful now than it was some years ago, but it must inevitably happen if Britain is at all to survive as a viable economic unit. As Walter Eltis and others have pointed out, this restructuring is a necessary precondition of the elimination of Inflation. Though ultimately I am one of those who believes that the restoration of a sound currency will be achieved by monetary efforts, I am also convinced that this must be accompanied by a re-allocation of resources towards productive industry including commerce and the export-earning professions. This is indeed a structural disease which urgently needs to be investigated.

HENRY FAIRLIE HAS NOW changed his tack and agrees that the nation is in a sad way. What he says, in essence, is that we are provincial—surely inescapable when we compare our 54 million people with 250 millions in the USA, and the national income of the Americans which is over 20 times ours—and that we are going giggling into the asylum. His *bête noire* is Bloomsbury which he suggests marks the moment when Low Comedy superseded High Seriousness. This is a little unfair. Bloomsbury contained, or was adjacent to, not only John Maynard Keynes (of whom more in a moment), two good novelists, E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf, several great philosophers—Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein—some good critics, and several passable painters. O.K., they've become a cult; but are they not far more interesting than the American cult of Thoreau, Hawthorne and Melville, and, surely, than the sub-cult of Fitzgerald and Hemingway?

Keynes is referred to by Henry Fairlie contemptuously. By any standards Keynes was a great and creative thinker about a "Highly Serious Question"—can capitalism survive? (He was much else as well, and would be worth remembering for his other writings too.) His work was serious in a way that few other writers of the time found it possible to be. A genuinely "Great Debate" took place. Its result is, partly, in the shape and form of contemporary economic institutions and the welfare state (a pan-European concept, by the way). There has been no such Great Debate since Keynes died, partly because on one issue (the end of Empire and the search for a new role in foreign policy) there was, give or take a few details, broad agreement, and on the other issue (the economy) there has been nothing original said. We await a Keynes, perhaps, to ask the right questions.

But, the matter may well be deeper than that. Since 1945, two great intellectual debates have by-passed the English-speaking world. One concerned Existentialism (and all that). In Britain, Sartre was seen as a novelist and a radical dissenting spirit. In France he was important philosophically because he was trying to make sense of despair, born of defeat. One way out of despair was Marxism: and there has been a discussion of Marx (alas, only in Marxian terminology) as one of the chief elements of intellectual life and controversy in Germany, France, Italy and Spain for many years now. These two movements, Existentialism and Marxism, have virtually passed the English-speaking world by.

In the British case, this is not because of pride or prejudice (or ignorance), but because of the strength of the utilitarian and pragmatic mode of our philosophical traditions. Our religion was Pelagian; since science killed it (in the celebrated Huxley/Wilberforce confrontation) scientific meliorism has taken its place. And, for many years, the social sciences and their product, "social engineering", have taken their place as the subject and mode of intellectual discourse about public affairs, while philosophy has appeared to deny that "Serious Questions", of the sort that Existentialism and Marxism deal

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with, are questions at all—they are but muddle.

I share this philosophical position, of course. But I am afraid that its popular expression does not quite present its positive achievements, nor its attitude to life which seems to me puritanical and stoical, highly serious and deeply moral. Although there is every evidence that our philosophers are actively involved in worthy public causes, the total effect, for better or worse, of their work seems to be a sort of nihilistic blandness; and as a consequence, there appears to be nothing for literature to be "about."

I do not subscribe to Henry Fairlie's optimism about America. I do not deny its vitality, its inventiveness and the earnestness of its public preoccupations—especially with three great recent questions, Viet Nam, and the Presidency, and the racial crisis. What I do not think Fairlie would accept is that this is all do and no think. In so far as the American intellectual is concerned, the common form of discourse about these sorts of issues is the social sciences; and, from criminology to economics, the social sciences are intellectually bankrupt. Keynes' followers here have conceded as much but it is a perception which is forcibly denied by vested academic interests in America. It is this bankruptcy that lies at the heart of the British inability to seize the magnitude of their own problem; they are using the tools that will not finish the job. In other words, I believe that the earlier Fairlie was far nearer the truth when he denied the possibility of effective social engineering. I would go less far and yet further; some social engineering manifestly works, but we have no idea why.

The attraction of Marxism is its spiritual earnestness: its acceptance of contradiction and conflict as the inner stuff of life; its apocalyptic largeness. The weakness of our Anglo-American social philosophy is its bland and often ineffective pragmatism. Our neighbours have often succeeded, and do not know why; we have repeatedly failed, and do not know why. We can only try without knowing. Our social sciences do not allow us powerfully to perceive, only helplessly to observe, the problems. The reinvention of a language of discourse for the Great Debate is probably our most urgent intellectual duty.

Elie Kedourie's Achievement

By David Pryce-Jones

TWO VOLUMES of essays, *The Chatham House Version* and *Arabic Political Memoirs*,[1] have proved that on the topic of the Middle East, there is one man at least who does not seek simply to reassure his friends. Great interests are at stake in the area, and naturally myth has been pressed into the service of those interests. To put myth to the scrutiny of truth is to realise its vulgarity, and also how original and lonely Professor Elie Kedourie is. His impact smashes the *idée reçue* of contemporary Arab evolution which is fanciful—to use a Kedourie key-word—and which he has distilled in this way:

> Fifty or a hundred years ago an author who felt drawn to middle-eastern subjects had a tremendous variety from which to choose: Barbary corsairs, belly dancers, fanatical Mussulmans, sultans, pashas, Moors, muezzins, harems. Now, in a decidedly poor exchange, it has to be the Arabs.
>
> By Arabs of course we do not mean the lively and interesting denizens of Cairo, Beirut, Damascus or Baghdad. We mean rather the collective entity which writers of books manufacture and in which they manage to smother the charm and variety of this ancient and sophisticated society. This collective entity is a category of European romantic historiography, and judged by its results, it is not a felicitous invention; for as they are described by their inventors the Arabs are a decidedly pitiable and unattractive lot; they erupt from the Arabian desert; they topple two empires, while making grandiloquent speeches in their rich and sonorous language; but all too soon the rot sets in, materialism and greed erode their spirit, and their caliphs change from lean puritans into fat voluptuaries. After that, it is all up with them: they are engulfed and enslaved by the Turks, hoodwinked by the British, colonised by the French, humiliated by the Jews, until at last they rise up again to struggle valiantly against Imperialism and Zionism under the banner of Nationalism and Socialism.

Note the confident rhythm of the language, how it carries its ironies with an almost dangerous patience; pointed, in the manner of a lightning conductor, straight to the storm; and obviously indifferent to popularity. Professor Kedourie will be heard for what he is saying, and not because he is the one to be saying it. About himself, he drops only chance remarks in the essays, that he grew up in Baghdad, went to the Alliance

[1] *The Chatham House Version & other Middle-Eastern Studies*. By ELIE KEDOURIE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.75. *Arabic Political Memoirs & other Studies*. By ELIE KEDOURIE. Frank Cass, £5.95.

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Israelite school there, and so benefited from the rigours of a French-based education. His several accounts of the spoliation of Iraq have a compressed passion which may result from experience, but he is not standing upon a soap-box of personal suffering. Unlike refugees and émigrés the world over who posit from the particular to the general, he looks to the archives first, for the records of governments against which the actions of citizens are to be measured.

Perhaps only a pessimist would do such a thing, perhaps only a pessimist has the stomach for the facts, when the fancies are so much easier to deal in. Professor Kedourie does not fall into the mundane style of journalistic abasement before some "problem" which has its "solution", after which the Upwards and Onwards of mankind will be resumed until the nations shall bask in light perpetual. He believes that human beings make mistakes, repeatedly, that out of the best intentions as often as not spring calamities, and that since description of complex events is so hard, moral judgments on them are not likely to be well-founded, or even valuable. I mean to say!

It is a truism now to observe that the Ottoman Empire was deprived of the joys of 18th-century enlightenment. Confronted by European powers able and willing to express their dynamism by means of commerce and war, the Ottoman Empire held to custom. No Ottoman Hume or Watts or Voltaire analysed what had gone wrong, nor what was to be done about it. Therefore Ottomans bad, Europeans good. The trick was to make the poor people themselves believe that in so far as this proposition was true, it was the whole truth.

> It is the common fashion today to denounce the imperialism of western powers in Asia and Africa. Charges of economic exploitation are made, and the tyranny and arrogance of the Europeans are arraigned. Yet it is a simple and obvious fact that these areas which are said to suffer from imperialism today have known nothing but alien rule throughout most of their history and that, until the coming of the Western powers, their experience of government was the insolence and greed of unchecked arbitrary rule. It is not on these grounds therefore that the appearance of the West in Asia and Africa is to be deplored. A curse the West has indeed brought to the East, but—and here lies the tragedy—not intentionally; indeed the curse was considered—and still is by many—a precious boon, the most precious that the West could confer on the East in expiation of its supposed sins; and the curse itself is as potent in its maleficence in the West as it is in the East. A rash, a malady, an infection spreading from western Europe through the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire, India, the Far East and Africa, eating up the fabric of settled society to leave it weakened and defenceless before ignorant and unscrupulous adventurers, for further horror and atrocity: such are the terms to describe what the West has done to the rest of the world, not wilfully, not knowingly, but mostly out of excellent intentions and by example of its prestige and prosperity.

These volumes of diverse essays may be considered doctor's reports upon this fifty- or hundred-year-old malady, which has proved irresistible from its first unlikely symptoms; the Ambassadors and envoys plenipotentiary, the cocked-hat party, who came urging upon sultan, khedive, and bey the need for reforms, without which assistance would have to be declined, regretfully. In a trice the talk was of constitutional government, public opinion, the intellectual classes, self-determination: all of which resumed the self-evident values on which the majesty of the West rested, and which in the East might one day take as transplants, but for the time being had as much real-life substance there as a magic carpet. In the Arab Middle East to this day, only Lebanon has what can be called a constitution. Parliaments elsewhere, if they exist, are and always have been arranged to express the power of the rulers, not the wishes of the ruled.

HERE AMONG THE RULED, as Professor Kedourie says, "a robust and uncomplicated approach to power has always existed." Tyranny they had expected, and had learnt, sadly but wisely, how to temper it by a variety of well-proved methods. A happy man, to their way of thinking, was one with a beautiful wife, a comfortable house, a secure job, and who did not know government, and was not known by it. The spread of Western notions was incompatible with such luxuriously private ends. In these essays are some absorbing biographical sketches of the small number of men quickest off the mark in adopting and then spreading Western notions, renegades from Islam and Christianity, the go-betweens of chancelleries, men driven off their heads by the Future and its possibilities, but whose practical significance lay in the openings they offered the great powers in the widening competition of their interests. Missionaries, notably at the American University of Beirut, must take their share of the initial blame.

"Three with a new song's measure may trample an empire down." So it proved. The Young Turks had little support, and in describing the onset of their revolution Professor Kedourie shows in a wide-sweeping *tour d'horizon* how baffled and suspicious the Arab provinces were when Abd al-Hamid, supposedly the Damned, fell into the hands of Westernisers—who in the event were to lead their fellow-citizens into the catastrophe of 1918.

Had the conquering British and French taken over where the Ottomans stopped, confusion would still have arisen; but the relation of ruler to ruled might have remained comparable, and

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the fabric of settled society not been utterly shredded. But accustomed to their own power politics elsewhere, the British and the French primarily sought advantage over one another, although the general interest of all concerned would have dictated a common policy. Professor Kedourie's energies have gone into establishing what exactly was happening behind the scenes in the time between the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the capture of Damascus (1918). In his view the people who were double-crossed in this high play of World War I politics were neither the Sharifians nor the Zionists, but the French, and that would be only normal, nothing for the romantic historiographers (who do seem dumbfounded into silence on the matter, especially now that *The Times Literary Supplement* is no longer a public alleyway for nameless muggers).

The inability of the British and the French to imagine that the Arabs might have standards of their own to be judged by, and were not simply lingering at a historical fancy-dress ball, is the Original Sin from which so many monsters were spawned. But had not a whole lot of new countries for them just been specially run up? How to proceed with them was a genuine dilemma, with no easy way out, though it had been met before not too badly (in India, for instance). Now numbers of the ruled were encouraged to believe that to have been satisfied with a beautiful wife and a comfortable house was a proof of backwardness, which they must set about rectifying. The hour of the chancellery go-betweens was at hand. Anyone who could turn his tongue to the approved political lingo of the West was sure of a career. Sa'ad Zaghlul, the kings of Iraq, and lesser nationalists too, are examples to Professor Kedourie of agitators who have brilliantly turned the tables on the West by words alone. They represented neither force nor tradition, nor the public, not even when grievances were articulated through them. They were "little officers."

There was also always the waiting mob. All that had to be done was to repeat certain slogans loudly enough, those slogans which the Western powers were expecting to hear because they had gone to the trouble of educating and philosophising around them. Constitutions were therefore improvised, self-determination encouraged, nationalism blessed, for were these not the rewards of catching up with modernity at last? The curse was at hand. The Armenians or the Assyrians might be put to the sword, the Kurds dispersed, ancient Jewish communities and the Palestinians alike ruined, settled society altogether dispossessed—but was it not possible for "foolish academics and excitable journalists" to claim that in spite of these temporary manifestations all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, as laid down by the believers in the sovereign rights of majorities whoever and wherever they are, and further guaranteed by fatuous diplomats sodden with emotion, the host of Arabian star-gazers in the train of T. E. Lawrence? It was, and is.

THE CONQUEST OF ONE COUNTRY by another is a neutral fact of history to Professor Kedourie, to do with the nature of man, and therefore futile as a basis of reproach. To knock the Turks out of the ring was all very well, there was nothing else for it, but it imposed the duty of dealing with a settled fabric of society as it had been found. After years of committees and conferences and White Papers, after a succession of institutions devised by famous generals and proconsuls, the ordinary citizen of the Middle East found himself abandoned by the great powers who had brought him up to date in their own image, without any of the accustomed fabric at all, at the mercy of wars and *coups d'état* and internal terror as never before. When today there are calls for a state in the Middle East in which Moslems, Jews and Christians may live together, one has to ask whether in their imperfect way the Turks did not provide such a state?

To have pursued their own interests would have been one way for the British to proceed, and there would have been nothing new or illegitimate about that. To have pretended that British interests were pursued for the sake of bringing Civilisation, or Independence, or Happiness, to the natives was ignorant, confused, sentimental:

> the outcome not so much of intellectual debility, as of that failure of nerve, that weakening of the will to rule, which became manifest among the British ruling classes in the aftermath of the first World War, and which was to make the dissolution of the British Empire so ugly, and vicious, to subjects and rulers alike.

The heirs of Hume, Watts and Voltaire ought to have realised that their consciences were of less moment that the fate of faraway peoples for whom they were responsible. What sort of principles are they when other people die of them? It was quite impossible for the faraway subjects (Professor Kedourie is actually speaking here of the Jews of Iraq, but as representatives of a wider range of victims) to discern "the prodigious spectacle that appeared, of deliquescent Liberals and *Tancred* Tories banding together in London to utilise the might and authority of a victorious empire in order to bring about in the Middle East, consciously and willingly, such conditions as had hitherto been seen only with the decay of authority and the decline of empire."

And banding together as they did, our deliquescent intellectuals and statesmen, men of principle without doubt, were able to work

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the older syllogism into a newer form, just as suitable and jolly: Ottomans bad, Europeans as bad, all rulers bad, ruled good, therefore Arabs good. Those who have put their shoulder to this endeavour inspire Professor Kedourie. The title essay of *The Chatham House Version,* in which he goes over the work of Arnold Toynbee, the most venerable of romantic historiographers, with a whole school in tow, and discovers in it "the shrill and clamant voice of English radicalism, thrilling with self-accusatory and joyful lamentation", may claim to be the most powerful and damaging polemic to have appeared in recent years. Professor Kedourie also moves quickly to the bedside of expiring autobiographies, for instance Albert Memmi's *Portrait of a Jew* and Lord Caradon's *A Start in Freedom.* Nobody has done more than he to bring out the feelings of Western guilt and shame and inadequacy which have been twisted inside out to emblazon the banners of Arab Nationalism and Socialism. Nobody has done more to show what it is like to be on the receiving end of these feelings. There is a classic to be written about guilt as a colonising and de-colonising motive, and these essays are indispensable studies for it.

As for the Arab-Israeli conflict, which some think the dominant issue of the region, it should be obvious that Professor Kedourie will see it as quite secondary, a by-product of the greater upheaval occasioned by the West. To him, the Zionists suffer from many of the same afflictions as the Arabs. At the hour of their supreme trial at the hands of a nationalist ideology, Zionists were able only to draw in under their own version of a nationalist ideology.

Professor Kedourie is fastidious to the end, but those who dislike such a temperament and call it morbid, or clinically dispiriting, are still left blocked by his scholarship. The city may be saved for the one just man in it, though that consolation is fragile and literary. Meanwhile we know that human beings, in both East and West, cannot bear very much reality.

Moonbeast in Sunshine

Talonheaded with obsidian glances
He threw his tangles through the long grass
Showed me a way this side that
Stabbed his white snout into his misdirections
Switched through a yellow flower into secrecy
Dived through a flowerstem and was gone

The slowworm confused me and was gone
He looked this way and then that way
A yellow flower outstared me the grass empty

Moonlight streaking along choppy waters
The foil creases as the astronaut beckons;
This wizard pointed the wrong way and it beat me.

Cross between electricity and melting snow
Hybrid of a moonbeam and a waterfall
Son of a lizard and a white explosion
Glittering dewcloud pierced by rifle-fire
Child of a speedboat and its splitknot wake

I look this way that—I fall between your pauses, unravelling
Stairs I may not descend, not yet—
Who is the slow worm?

Maze-tracer ripping up your clews in one swift gesture
One swift backward strike so I no longer understand
No longer see the way, like a wound closing,
Like a sudden change of waveband

Quartz-sand pouring into mercury
Self-made torrent of metal milk.

Peter Redgrove

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And the Dance goes on

On Anthony Powell—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

THE PUBLICATION of the final volume in Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time*[1] has seen the huge fog of speculation about what *kind* of work this great sequence actually is grow insufferably denser. All along the line during its twenty-five years of writing, the *Dance* has attracted grandiose interpretations like millstones, and Mr Powell has learnt to shrug them all off, dismissively, so that he could get on with the job. As the volumes stacked up, it came to seem obligatory, if one were presuming to talk about it at all, to evoke the State of the Novel, or the State of the Nation, or even both of them at once. How inappropriate, how very unhelpful it is, then, that *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, which provides so neat a conclusion, should have been the signal for even more portentous summations. Really it should have served to clear the mists away and lay a hundred bothersome theories to rest. And the proper questions to ask about it were those very ordinary, highly necessary, novel-readers' questions about how satisfactory and satisfying a culmination this last book represents.

Quite simply, *A Dance to the Music of Time* is a long and marvellous novel about people-in-time. They are very much Mr Powell's people, in Mr Powell's own stretch of time, and place; but since we all dance to the music which "the winged and naked greybeard plays", in any place, in any age, the effect would be the same anywhere. Gradually the realisation has dawned that the experiences Mr Powell deals in are universal, not restricted; and one more achievement given a label of "characteristically English" has burst its bonds to awaken a much wider interest. The *Dance* has also burst out of another straitjacket, imposed on it by those who mistook the nature of the patterning Mr Powell was intending. As early as the second chapter of *A Question of Upbringing* (Vol. I), he was insisting that "disregard for the unities is something that cannot be circumvented in human life." In other words, there never was going to be a grand drawing together of all the threads, the revelation of a transcending design. Human character and motive are multifarious, so the patterns of the dance could not be too inexorable or obvious; and harmonies would be perceived, but they could never signify more than a moderate amount. As long as time itself lasted, and people were caught up in its music, the dance would continue; and it could never be resolved with a contrived flourish, all its participants bowing out together. The quite predictable resolution of Mr Powell's sequence was therefore one in which most of the famous characters remaining—and one character in particular—would finally be seen to be carried out of the dance while others stayed in it to carry on the steps. *Hearing Secret Harmonies* was destined to be more of a convenient termination than a resounding climax.

THE MEDIUM which Mr Powell chose for his survey of the *Dance* was comedy, of a special and difficult kind: the comedy inherent in things as they are. It took time for this to seep in, since some contrast in style with the five pre-war novels was immediately apparent. When the first books in the post-war sequence appeared there was more than a little puzzlement, and a shaking of wise critical heads. The leisurely progression of the narrative in each through a small number of carefully selected and painstakingly explored episodes was too like the slowness of life itself for some, and the concealed implications discerned in the most ordinary of incidents were not universally greeted as blinding revelations. Besides, did not decent, well-made novels, even constituent parts of a *roman fleuve*, require a beginning, a middle and an end, with nicely-placed quotas of action? The action inside individual volumes of *The Music of Time* (the *Dance*, incidentally, only came into the title at the blurb of Vol. VIII and in the half-title of Vol. XI) seemed to go nowhere except onwards. How strenuously the blurbs battled to make what they could of a formidable, yet curiously indefinable—possibly rather awkward?—animal. As late as

[1] *Hearing Secret Harmonies*. By ANTHONY POWELL. Heinemann, £3.10.

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Casanova's Chinese Restaurant (Vol. V) and *The Kindly Ones* (Vol. VI), each novel, while patently part of an ongoing series, could, we were assured, be read as "complete in itself." Or it might, of course, be helpful (the blurb of *The Kindly Ones*) to think of it as a sextet breaking down into two trilogies. (Patiently one told people to begin at the beginning, the only way of making sense of the whole story; but even now there are many who accepted those blurb assurances, started at V or VI, or even II or III, lost their way, and gave up.)

By the time the hump of Vol. VI is surmounted —and it no doubt helped that that book, *The Kindly Ones*, was arguably the finest in the series up to that point—the slow and stately progress, at the author's own unchanging pace, on his own narrative terms, in the medium of a comedy which is uniquely his, has at last been accepted. The blurb of *The Valley of Bones* (Vol. VII) tackles the whole matter with greatly increased confidence. The book is "another volume of Anthony Powell's long novel, *The Music of Time*. It begins the six-volume sequence planned as the second half of that work."

"THINGS AS they are." Powell has repeatedly insisted, and has finally carried all but the most resistant of readers with him, that the truth is more fantastic than any invention. There is a relentless tendency, for example, for matters of everyday living to take on all the characteristics of farce. But usually Mr Powell is making this assertion in a novel, in the person of his narrator, Nicholas Jenkins. And here, in any appraisal of the nature and the effectiveness of Mr Powell's comedy, is where one embarks on a zigzagging course between two apparently contradictory positions.

On the one hand, the truest comedy, the most profoundly farcical humour, is to be seen in real life situations. But on the other, Mr Powell has not elected to record facts, to write memoirs or autobiography with the *Dance* (he is moving on to autobiography now that the sequence is finished, and it promises to be a very different kind of work). Mr Powell is writing a fiction; and has had to invent a set of characters and events which constitute suitable and convincing equivalents for actual ones. So, does the fact that he is really imagining, rather than recording, remove people and things from reality—is it an adroit imitation of reality, but, like some other imitations, a fake? No, not at all, since what Mr Powell makes up never strains credibility; we never want to ask whether it is genuine, because it is so clearly happening all around us, all the time. And yet: closely examining the places, the

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

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settings, in which things occur in the novels, one finds that the author has frequently removed characters and incidents from actual known locations and placed them in equivalent ones which carry an air of remoteness and fantasy. By this means, it seems (manoeuvring boys in an unnamed, mist-enshrouded Eton, stranding Uncle Giles, Mrs Erdleigh and Dr Trelawney in their weird seaside hotel, watching the bizarre denizens of the Intelligence Section), he can represent human oddity more accurately than if he had kept to the dully actual. And so on, in a dizzying, seesaw motion between reality and invention: the problem is not made easier to resolve by the novels' deft modification of the way in which many of their devoted readers look at life, its patterns and recurrences.

One elementary and essential role of invention, of course, is that of tidying things up. Nearly all ordinary lives tail off, or peter out, with no ingredient of startling, or redeeming, farce or tragedy. But at least *some* fictitious lives, even in fictions as elbow-close to reality as Mr Powell's, must be given some extraordinary conclusion, must end in something approaching a climax. A few people have to be got out of the way abruptly —preferably in a way which is not merely arbitrary, but has plausible connections with other parts of the scheme. So it seems quite believable that the lives of Jenkins' two school intimates, Charles Stringham and Peter Templer, should both have been terminated, in an indirect way, by the monstrous Widmerpool, whom they both long ago held in derision and contempt. In their case it is but the chance of war. Characters in the most naturalistic of novels exist for the purpose of acting upon each other in fateful ways, and the end of Stringham and Templer in *The Military Philosophers* (Vol. IX) happens without any air of too elaborately contrived an irony, in the circumstances.

NATURALLY, individual novels in a twelve-volume sequence did not need to have plot and characters tidied up too rigorously. People could easily be left in mid-career, or mid-decline, carrying on much as they usually did, with the expectation that they would turn up again in their familiar guises at some later stage. Endings had only to provide an adequate punctuation point; and indeed Mr Powell's endings have frequently looked engagingly offhand, even throwaway: with Jenkins ensconced in gloomy discussion of the family Trust with Uncle Giles; or receiving Widmerpool's unsolicited offer of advice on matters marital; or listening to Dicky Umfraville's claim that he won a packet on a horse ridden by Trapnel's father in Cairo. If anything, this inconclusiveness along the way made it necessary to give the final volume a special sort of resolution; if not some momentous gesture (unlikely for other reasons already suggested), then at least a form of tidying which would leave all outstanding matters decisively at rest.

It would not need to be too draconian in the sense of disposing, at a stroke, of a whole surviving set of major characters. Death had taken its toll only too comprehensively in the war volumes, in theatres overseas and in the terrible night at the Café de Madrid. Notable characters making first appearances (or effective first appearances) in the course of the war or after—Pamela Flitton, X. Trapnel, Louis Glober—had already been seen out of the Dance before the last volume was due. So there was, in fact, just one outstanding life-and-death issue remaining to be settled: how Widmerpool should end. Since death had attended upon the greater number of the major characters whose lives had regularly impinged on Jenkins's—on Templer and Stringham, Uncle Giles and Lady Molly Jeavons, on Chips Lovell and Hugh Moreland, Barnby and Sir Magnus Donners and Milly Andriadis—it was clear that Widmerpool himself, indisputably the focal figure of the whole enterprise, would need to die before the work could be called complete. Widmerpool, of all people, could not be left running away laboriously and purposefully into the mists of the future.

Thus the handling of the death of Widmerpool would take on the nature of a crucial test. Certainly the success of the last volume as a conclusion to the series would depend on it. And there would be more serious issues at stake: the choice of a wrong kind of fate for Widmerpool would not *logically* undermine the achievement of the first eleven books; but in a strange way it might cast doubt on much that went before by leaving a notable flaw in the picture.

It is fascinating to consider first how, in *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, some other characters of long standing are inventively tidied away. Since a decade has elapsed after *Temporary Kings*, Mrs Myra Erdleigh, already elderly if still formidable in the earlier novel, may be quietly allowed to die in the interim. Dicky Umfraville is a rather different case. Nothing sinister or fateful attaches to him. He has sauntered from marriage to marriage and from war to war with raffish ease. He can credibly be left alive, a melancholic octogenarian who is nevertheless capable of giving "a rather good impersonation of himself as an old-fashioned drug fiend." Similarly, survival can also be bestowed upon Sunny Farebrother, whose style of striving ("power was won by self-abasement") was invariably more meticulous and less gross than Widmerpool's; more gentlemanly, when it comes down to it.

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Now around eighty himself, Farebrother is discovered by Jenkins in a state of curious contentment in an underground train, travelling home after a funeral. He has, it transpires, seen Jimmy Stripling out.

> I make a point [he says] of going to funerals and memorial services, sad as they are, because you always meet a lot of people at them you haven't seen for years, and that often comes in useful later.

Farebrother, as long ago as *A Question of Upbringing*, made a business visit to the Templers while "staying in the neighbourhood for a funeral." Such is the perennial naive ease, the apparent innocuousness of Farebrother's machinations, one feels he will be allowed to go on forever, never needing to attend even his own funeral, or only if it advantages him in some business connection.

Jean Duport, formerly Jenkins' mistress, returns in *Hearing Secret Harmonies* as the widow, now, of Colonel Flores, who has been assassinated by urban guerrillas in his South American homeland. Wheeling her crippled ex-husband, Bob Duport, through the art gallery where his collection of seascapes is on sale, she is studiedly and icily distant with Jenkins, as she has been for years. Jean may bow out of the Dance without the necessity of death since the emotions she evoked are now irrecoverably departed; though, in a second's flashback, with miraculous and haunting skill, Jenkins *does* recover her voice and soft laugh from forty years before:

> It's the bedroom next to yours. Give it half an hour. Don't be too long.

But it is Widmerpool more than anyone whose death *must* wait on him in the last volume, as the only culmination of a train of escalating disasters, blows of increasing magnitude dealt in vain to a figure of ostensibly irreducible pride and indomitable will; one who, beginning as the most striving and least athletic of schoolboys, has been a successful schemer in the City, a Colonel with a key role in the War Cabinet office, an MP, and a Life Peer. Given the alternations in *A Dance to the Music of Time* between a reality that is fantastic and a fantasy that is real, how has Mr Powell resolved the matter of what to do about the death of his major comic creation?

WIDMERPOOL HAS been off the scene for Jenkins for some ten years when *Hearing Secret Harmonies* begins; it starts with a beautifully-done account of Jenkins and Isobel rather improbably crayfishing with a group of mystic hippies, an activity that seems unlikely to

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connect with anyone else in the cast of characters, least of all with Widmerpool himself. When last seen at the very end of *Temporary Kings* (Vol. XI), Widmerpool was on his way to the House of Lords to clear up some business before vanishing into obscurity and voluntary exile. His wife, Pamela, is dead in sordid circumstances, and he himself is under a cloud of suspicion—there have been dubious trade dealings with an Eastern European power. At the beginning of Vol. XII, Widmerpool is back from his exile, which he has spent, furthering his own interests, in the United States, and is very much altered. He has turned against parliamentary institutions, and his "new axis for power focus" is the counter-culture of the young, imbibed during a stay in California in the mid-1960s: he is working on a book to be called *Pogrom of Youth*. In America, he has acquired enemies, but also adherents: there has even been a move to propose him for the Nobel Prize.

Would it have happened? I find it entirely credible in the context of Widmerpool's career, at least. The "embodiment of thankless labour and unsatisfied ambition", Widmerpool is born to strive ludicrously after power and influence. Frustrated, even obliquely disgraced, in the orthodox social and political channels, he would never have the grace and humility to retire from the contest. Widmerpool, as always, would simply switch the struggle to another theatre of operations. But would Widmerpool take up with the student left, throw in his lot with youth? Well, the present is not a time when the middle-aged and elderly have been notably frightened of losing dignity by aping the ways of the young. Callow and admiring youths no longer gather round to hear the amorous Tales of an older Hoffmann; rather do envious old Hoffmanns hasten to pay court to the liberated ways of adolescence.... I don't think Widmerpool would have thought twice about going where he thought the power lay. And there would equally have been no lack of the kind of supporter who would propose him for a Nobel award.

Perfectly believable also is the manner of Widmerpool's reappearance. His re-entries into the novels of the sequence have always been a matter of surprise, as grotesque, disconcerting and entertaining as his emergence from the mist on p.2 of the first novel of the *Dance*. In *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, he arrives on the television screen—he had to, sooner or later—during the News, the victim of a student attack while he is being installed as the Chancellor of a new university. But Widmerpool is far from distressed by the assault, for which the twin daughters of J. G. Quiggin are responsible (and the panorama of elders of all kinds coping with their wayward young in the novel is piquantly convincing). He is, in fact, delighted:

> Not the smallest resentment. Even glad this has taken place. Let me congratulate those two girls on being such excellent shots with the paint pot....

And subsequently he turns his Chancellor's residence into a kind of commune for the progressive young. Again asking "Is it likely?" (because Mr Powell's supreme skill lies in convincing us that the likely and the utterly extraordinary are never far apart), one replies "Yes." Because Widmerpool's self-abasement and espousal of commune politics are not *really* an inconceivable extrapolation of some public behaviour in the climate of the early 1970s.

But the literally fatal step on a decisively downward path for Widmerpool is taken when he falls first into alliance, then rapidly into rivalry, with the most powerful of Mr Powell's new creations, the diabolic Scorpio Murtlock. Murtlock, first seen in the crayfishing episode in the opening pages (where he exercises no power at all over Jenkins), is the leader of a sect which has revived "Trelawneyism" among the young; and the mage Dr Trelawney took his followers, members of a cult practising mystic harmony, for early-morning runs dressed in pastel-coloured robes, in *The Kindly Ones*. The sect settles in Widmerpool's own cottage near Stourwater, after he has finally given up his chancellorship. There is (offstage, but filtering back to Jenkins in scraps of gossip and hearsay) a bitter contest between Widmerpool and Murtlock for power over the cult followers. In keeping with the times, the group has discarded its robes to run naked; and practises elaborate and alarming sexual rites, with Widmerpool doing the best he can manage. Running, striving to be ahead, has eternally been Widmerpool's obsession, and the climax of the struggle with Murtlock is the run on which Widmerpool, racing to the front of the group, shouts out "I'm leading, I'm leading now", collapses—and dies.

SO IS THIS DRASTIC decline and fall of Mr Powell's most important character a strictly believable event? It is a merciless reduction of Widmerpool, and truly horrifying in the telling: suddenly all the comedy drops away and Widmerpool is left a pathetic martyr to his own striving. Murtlock's victory is that of one power seeker over another, and it carries pungent suggestions that the power men of the future may well be the priests of irrationality and violence. But the nagging question stays to be answered: would *Widmerpool* have gone out in that way? It is an extremely important consideration, because *A Dance to the Music of Time* has relied upon an especially nice adjustment between the real and the fantastic, and an involvement of readers in the sheer

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possibility of the characters and their doings. It would be deeply disappointing to have something *im*possible happen now.

I believe that many readers are going to find it hard to credit the circumstances of "Ken" Widmerpool's ultimate decay and demise. I also believe that as soon as they presume to be sceptical about it, alleging that "their" Widmerpool would not have ended in this way, somebody in the real world, outside Mr Powell's "fictions", will do something which will prove the author to have been only too moderate in his inventions. Widmerpool, after all, has lived on into an age in which the "torrential" nature of events depicted by Robert Burton has been hugely accelerated.

> Today we hear of new Lords and officers created, to-morrow of some great men deposed, and then again of fresh honours conferred; one is let loose, another imprisoned, one purchaseth, another breaketh; he thrives, his neighbour turns bankrupt; now plenty, then again dearth and famine; one runs, another rides, wrangles, laughs, weeps, &c.

It is all going on now much faster than ever before; the speed of it an ever greater strain and challenge to the ruthlessly resilient individual. Widmerpool's adaptability was always remarkable: a spectacular gift of will and energy enabled him to bounce back from public and private misfortune in a manner not at all uncharacteristic of some figures in real life. An ever-increasing confusion in our time about where power, advantage and meaning actually do reside, allied to the old, insatiable desire of wilful men to have these things for themselves, has produced some very strange postures among the famous, and will produce stranger yet. I feel that Mr Powell has designed an altogether appropriate and intrinsically likely end for Widmerpool, and one thoroughly in keeping with his beginning in the book.

AFTER THE DEATH of Widmerpool, there is little left to be said by Jenkins, ever the coolest and most restrained of narrators: just over one page. The penultimate scene of the novel has taken place in Barnabas Henderson's gallery, to which Bithel (resurrected for the purpose from *The Soldier's Art*) has come bringing both the news of Widmerpool's death, and Widmerpool's Modigliani drawing—a nice perception, this, of the way in which Mammon bides his time during the worshipping of the strangest gods, since Barnabas has had his eye on it all the time he has been a member of Murtlock's "Harmony" sect. Jenkins leaves, notices that snow is falling, and sees the navvies gathering round their fire-bucket, which is where it all began twelve volumes before. Then he is suddenly back beside his own garden bonfire, thinking of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*,

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and the infinite compass of human deeds. Finally he stands, impersonal surveyor of the entire gigantic scene whose motion has now—for him, and in his own time—come to rest, contemplating stillness, divining the intersection of the timeless with time:

> The thudding sound from the quarry had declined now to no more than a gentle reverberation, infinitely remote. It ceased altogether at the long drawn wail of a hooter—the distant pounding of centaurs' hoofs dying away, as the last note of their conch trumpeted out over hyperborean seas. Even the formal measure of the Seasons seemed suspended in the wintry silence.

Such an ending is wholly apposite, and gravely impressive in its very brevity and reticence. This is where Jenkins elects to stop, though for others, elsewhere, the Dance will be going on. And in fact the life of *Hearing Secret Harmonies* is as diverse, absorbing and entertaining as that of any other novel in the sequence. To the end, Mr Powell has gone on introducing new characters who would richly earn a place in the larger scheme if this were, say, the sixth novel rather than the last. Gibson Delavacquerie, the immaculate and precise poet of French Caribbean descent who handles the business of the Magnus Donners Prize, is an excellent Seventies successor to all those scheming *littérateurs* who hung around St John Clarke in the Thirties and Forties. Fiona Cutts, daughter of Roddy and Susan, and a trial to her parents, bids fair to replace Pamela Flitton as the hell-cat of the Dance by about 1984; she ends up, after her period among Scorpio Murtlock's followers, married to the inscrutable and distinctly unsavoury Russell Gwinnett.

If the creation of major characters left Mr Powell with the obligation of disposing of them in convincing ways before the book could be finished, the invention of minor characters several volumes before has provided its opportunities. "Akworth" has until now meant no more than the name of the boy exposed by Widmerpool in the sending of a homosexual note to Peter Templer at school. In *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, at the wedding of his grand-daughter, Sir Bertram Akworth is the object of an elaborate act of repentance on the part of Widmerpool:

> In those days . . . I allowed no—at least very little—unfettered play of those animal forces that free the spirit, though later I began to understand the way, for example, that nakedness removes impediments of all sorts . . . a man must develop his female nature as well as the male. . . .

And out of even greater obscurity (his only earlier appearance was as an unnamed undergraduate at one of Sillery's Oxford tea-parties) comes Canon Paul Fenneau, a priest who knew Murtlock when the latter was a child, and has taken a scholar's interest in the magic practised by Scorpio and his kind: "believe me, mumbo-jumbo has its place in this world of ours. Make no mistake about that." At a Royal Academy dinner, Widmerpool persuades Fenneau to act as his initial contact with Murtlock, whom he has heard of, but not so far met. . . .

MR POWELL handles the eccentrics and the deviants, the power-seekers and the man-managers, of today as adeptly as he has handled any in the half-century span of his great undertaking. To re-read now the earlier volumes of *A Dance to the Music of Time* up to about the middle of the wartime years is to receive, even if neither author nor readers wanted it this way, an impression of the recent past as something inescapably invested with nostalgic content—nostalgia having become an industry and an escape. But while we are praising Mr Powell for his evocation of a half-century of our past it is worth pausing to look at the way in which he has taken us into the present. He is as sure of this ground as of any, as accurate and relentless in his exposure of its absurdities and fevers as he is with any time in the past. He knows that he—and we—stand in the most chilling kind of silence as we watch the Dance beckoning us away into the distance.

Détente

Edited by GEORGE URBAN

This book consists of thirteen dialogues and a three-cornered conversation on the topical question of East-West détente. The four 'baskets' discussed at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe are analysed, but the scope of the book goes far beyond these, giving this symposium a depth and durability entirely its own.

Contributors: Bruno Pittermann; Sir William Hayter; François Bondy; Robert F. Byrnes; Claus D. Kernig; Johan Jørgen Holst; Wolf H. Halsti; Richard Pipes; Alfred Grosser; Adam Ulam; George W. Ball; Dean Rusk; Zbigniew Brzezinski; François Duchêne; Leopold Labedz.

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Victors & Victims

More New Fiction—By James Price

THE ROOMS of my suburban childhood were furnished with brass trays, enamelled metal bowls, ivory ornaments, framed photographs of groups of army officers, and water colours of Indian scenes. India was nearer and more visible than France, or Stockport. I can still see a photograph of a fort on the north-west frontier, a bleak and terrifying place which my father looked back on with apparent warmth and nostalgia; and I still possess an Afghan dagger which he brought home with him in the early 1920s. India was part of the experience of my father's generation; by contrast, I don't know many of my mid-40s age group who know much about it, or feel anything special towards it. It was during the 1960s, with the dissatisfaction of the young with the materialistic west, that it was discovered all over again.

The winner of this year's Booker Prize for Fiction, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*,[1] considers these two Indias, the one of two generations past (1923, to be exact) and the one of the present. There are two plots, which interlock. In the first, Olivia, the wife of an officer in the Indian Civil Service, abandons her husband for a minor Indian prince and a lifetime's sentence to a remote mountain village. In the second, Olivia's husband's grand-daughter (by his second wife) comes to India to reconstruct Olivia's story and finds herself following a similar course, finishing her narrative high in the mountains where Olivia died, pregnant by an Indian clerk and calmly questioning whether she will ever wish to return. The two stories can be taken apart in synopsis, but in the novel they are closely interwoven. So the modern girl is made pregnant by her Indian lover on the sacred spot where Olivia was made pregnant by the Nawab, and Olivia's abortion is counterbalanced by the modern girl's failed abortion—she changes her mind half way through the performance. And the modern girl's process of discovery—of Olivia, of India—parallels Olivia's discovery of herself, of India.

So India is seen as it was in 1923, and as it is now, and the double perspective is given movement and meaning by the intellectual and spiritual development of the two central characters. It is the development of the two characters which matters. The book is not a travelogue; the reader never knows precisely, geographically, where he is. And although it is the real India which Mrs Jhabvala describes, it is also a country of the mind, a place of testing and decision. *Heat and Dust* is one of those rare novels in which the characters grow. They do so unforcedly, with no easily assumed claim on our understanding.

Olivia loves and admires Douglas, her husband; but he is absorbed in his duties, and she is bored by her idleness and the monotonous social round. The habits of speech and thought of the English community are acutely conveyed. Douglas, the soldierly and conscientious autocrat, is not an unsympathetic figure; nor is Major Minnies, lover of Urdu poetry. The wives Olivia mixes with are hearty and commonsensical. But from them, and towards the Nawab, Olivia is drawn, each sweltering afternoon making the dusty journey to his palace in the Rolls-Royce he sends for her; not passively, not mysteriously and inexplicably, but as a natural expression of her character and intelligence. She has the impatience and strength to be different from others; both the Nawab and Harry, the English tutor who lives in his household, recognise these qualities in her. In his retirement Major Minnies writes about the danger for the European who allows himself to love India too much: India will always find its victims among the most sensitive people, through their finest feelings.

OLIVIA'S STRENGTH allows her to become the Nawab's lover, to undergo a dreadful Indian abortion, to cut herself off completely from English society. The modern girl, whose name we never know, is made of similar fibre. She rents a cheap room, dresses in Indian clothes, and lives simply and accessibly. When a young Englishman, with shaved head and dressed in Indian robes, arrives, she lets him share her room and bed: she is well aware that he is a sad, comic, self-destructive figure and that she is simply being used. Later she sleeps with Inder Lal, the little clerk whose wife happens to be away and by whom she becomes pregnant. When she sees an old beggarwoman dying on a rubbish dump she moves heaven and earth to help her, in the face of general indifference. When she visits someone

[1] *Heat and Dust*. By RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA. John Murray, £3.95.

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in hospital she empties the bedpan of one of the patients, an old fruitseller: no one else will do it.

> Everyone looked at me as if I had committed some terrible act of pollution, and the fruit man himself also shrank from me so that when as usual I offered him some of the food I had brought he refused it.

Both she and Olivia are essentially English. Both are capable of experiencing intense joy. Neither is a victim. What they achieve is, in one sense, what they reject; but for both characters the story ends on an upward note, in the middle of a movement towards the attainment of a kind of spiritual poise. There are victims in the book, of course, the most notable being Harry, the ruined boy who was bullied at school, loves his prince, and comes back to London to lead a quiet life with his mother in Kensington. There is another incarnation of this character in *Autobiography of a Princess*, James Ivory's film from Mrs Jhabvala's script shown during the London Film Festival in November. Here he is played by James Mason (a superlatively reticent and sensitive performance), having tea one afternoon with an Indian princess in her London flat and talking over the days of the Maharajah, her father. Girlishly she remembers the pig-sticking, the feasts, the great occasions, a glittering and gracious way of life. His memories are of something different, less romantic, darker. "I remember asking His Highness about the singing girls. He said they probably died of pox in the bazaar. I suppose he was joking." Now he is writing a book: it is on an arcane and rarefied subject and it will occupy him for the rest of his life.

THE "HISTORY MAN"[2] of Malcolm Bradbury's title is Howard Kirk, radical sociologist at a plate-glass university, author of the successful *The Coming of the New Sex* and *The Defeat of Privacy* (not yet published), a new man, a force to be reckoned with. He is the history man because history is on his side: the collapse of capitalism will occur with his aid and the emergence of the post-capitalist state will find him on top. The reader is encouraged to believe that this cannot really be true: there must be someone who can oppose his awfulness and deliver his comeuppance. The beautiful Miss Callendar, teacher of literature, perhaps? She fends him off so encouragingly, opposing him on points of principle which she is always able to define with the most deflating clarity; yet she fails, falling on to his study sofa like the rest of womankind, a victim of the plot, as Howard says, the plot of history. Or maybe the novelist himself can lend a hand?

> The door of a room adjoining opens a little; a dark, tousled-haired head, with a sad visage, peers through, looks at Howard for a little, and then retreats. The face has a vague familiarity; Howard recalls that this depressed-looking figure is a lecturer in the English department, a man who, ten years earlier, had produced two tolerably well-known and acceptably reviewed novels, filled, as novels then were, with moral scruple and concern. Since then there has been silence, as if, under the pressure of contemporary change, there was no more moral scruple and concern, no new substance to be spun. The man alone persists; he passes nervously through the campus, he teaches, sadly, he avoids strangers.

But all he does is delay the inevitable a little.

Kirk's commitment to the historical process takes a number of forms, the most notable being the ingenious engineering of an invitation from the university to an Eysenck-like figure to deliver a lecture, an occasion designed to create student riot and injury, which it does. His other coup is to goad an unattractive student, Carmody, into opposing him ("I think you've made a heavy, anal job of this", Howard tells him, "because you're a heavy, anal type"), to create a political confrontation out of it, and then to ruin him: "he was an historical irrelevance", Howard says later. In Kirk's teaching, there is only one methodology. At one point Professor Marvin exclaims that there are two sides to every case. There aren't, says Howard, "you'll just sink into your liberal mess, if you accept that." Another colleague describes Fascism as "an elegant sociological construct, a one-system world. Its opposite is contingency or pluralism or liberalism." And Kirk's one-system world wins, at least in so far as any one term can produce victory: by the end of the book the vacation has arrived, and he is for the moment content.

The History Man is a ruthless, brilliant, and very funny book. It spends a lot of time on things, on the architecture and furnishing of the new university buildings, on the objects in the Kirk household, on the class and occupational stratification of the seaside town upon which the university has alighted, like a visitation from another planet. It spends a lot of time also on daily events: getting up, eating, going up and down in lifts, doing the shopping, preparing for the parties for which the Kirks, husband and wife, are famous. There is a marvellously described faculty meeting, a parable about the use and misuse of democracy, one of the best things Mr Bradbury has done. The whole book is told in the present tense, appropriately for Kirk, for whom everything has always to be happening.

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[2] *The History Man.* By MALCOLM BRADBURY. Secker & Warburg, £3.50.

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And yet, and yet. There is something about *The History Man* which makes me uneasy. There *are* two sides to every case, even to the case of Kirk; and for all the detail piled on detail, Mr Bradbury only lets us take one view of his creation. It isn't comfortable to hate a fictional character as much as I found myself hating Howard Kirk, and then to see him triumph at the end; it isn't comfortable, and the feelings released have no useful or therapeutic object. Standing back a few paces from the book, I wonder whether I haven't been encouraged to smash glass and break up the furniture by as inflammatory and as one-sided a discourse as any Kirk himself is likely to have been guilty of. Interestingly, although Kirk plots and precipitates confrontations, he lets others take the lead when the glass-smashing begins: it is a student sit-in which results in the dismissal of the wretched Carmody, and someone else leads the mob which tramples his friend Henry underfoot before the lecture by the Eysenck figure. Similarly, Mr Bradbury plotted *The History Man* and the reader seems to be cast as the mob.

Can a novelist be totalitarian towards his characters? I seem to have come to the question John Spurling put in this journal recently. What freedom does a fictional character have? In satire I concede that he may have less, and, yes, *The History Man* is satire; both the slanted, over-simplified view of what the teaching of sociology in the 1960s was about and the lambasting of a character constructed to represent this view are perfectly acceptable in a satiric context. The trouble is that Mr Bradbury is a remarkably good novelist, and he has created characters real enough for us to want them to have some autonomy.

MARTIN AMIS'S *Dead Babies*[3] is a more overt kind of satire. At some time in the not too distant future (which we are meant to apply to the present), when there are I-type Jaguars and when in the name of liberation everything is permitted, a group of young people are spending the weekend at Appleseed Rectory, somewhere in the English countryside. There they practice atrocities upon each other, in the forms of sex, drugs, alcohol, and violence, a little like the performers in *Philosophy in the Boudoir*. Claims of love, concern, and respect are "dead babies."

> "We're ecstatic materialists", said Andy as he crawled across the floor, holding spent brandy bottles up to the light. "Meaning, we grab whatever the fuck's going." He drank deeply from an unattended glass. "Plus which, we grab it from people who haven't got much anyway."

[3] *Dead Babies*. By MARTIN AMIS. Cape, £3.25.

The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688

David Hume
Abridged and introduced by Rodney W Kilcup

The original *History* was first published between 1754 and 1761 in six volumes and, because Hume tried to write a non-partisan study from a critical scientific standpoint, was subject to intense criticism from all sides. In examining Hume's notion of scientific historiography Kilcup focuses on the specific relation between his conception of knowledge and his definition of historical objectivity; he finds Hume an early exponent of the doctrine of the "cunning of Reason" operating in history. *Classics of British Historical Literature.* **£10.50**

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There is the divinely beautiful Quentin, who never sleeps; his wife Celia, who has bad skin; Giles, who drinks a good deal and whose waking and sleeping hours are spent in a state of terror lest some accident befall his teeth; Andy Adorno, a peculiarly nasty sexual thug; Diana, a cold bitch; Lucy Littlejohn, a golden-hearted whore; three Americans, Skip, Marvell, and Roxeanne and Keith, a horrendously fat and hideous dwarf, whose existence is made a misery by a disordered stomach and the revulsion he inspires in others.

Mr Amis discloses his hand at the outset, winding up these violent caricatures and setting them into frenetic supercharged motion; and though there is a plot of a kind, a mystery involving the periodical visitations of a threatening stranger which finally resolves itself into an orgy of destruction, the whirling elements of the book aren't going anywhere, and the impression is static. The only shading in the picture is the bad trips, the "street sadness", the "false memory." It's a high-pitched *aaargh* of a book, a moment of climax seized and stretched and then suddenly stopped: all *fff* and no *ppp*.

Mr Amis achieves his effects by a kind of literary *tachisme*, splattering the page with physical and visceral epithets in a furiously excremental manner. It's catching: the reader falls into the mood, and though the cruelties and sexual horrors and bad language quickly become monotonous, momentum and interest are sustained through what is a relatively short book by the author's energy and exhilaration. The success of the novel lies partly in the way this method can bring off such a hideously comic characterisation as that of Keith, and partly in the simple fact of its violently aggressive high spirits. With so much wilting, anaemic writing about, it's good to have a little mayhem. It will be interesting to see, after *The Rachel Papers* and now this, what Mr Amis will get up to next. In the meantime, here is an example of his writing at its succinct, macabre best. Giles is having his recurring nightmare:

> In the master-suite, on knees and elbows, Giles Coldstream was creeping round the floor in search of the telephone, both hands pressed tightly over his mouth. The curling green cord eventually led him to a heap of spent gin bottles beneath his desk. With his left palm still flat over his lips Giles tugged at the wire, hobbled into a crouch, and dialled two digits.
>
> "Get me Dr Wallman. Quickly. Dr Sir *Gerald* Wall—"
>
> —But even as he spoke, a tooth the shape and hue of a potato-chip slopped over his tongue and fell with a hollow rattle into the bakelite receiver.
>
> "Please, *quickly*."
>
> "What number do you want?" asked a female voice.
>
> "Please. I'm—they're all—"
>
> And now, in strips, like an unstrung necklace or

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rippling piano keys, they began to cascade from his mouth.

"What number do you want?" the voice repeated.

Giles dropped the telephone. His hands fidgeted frenetically inside his mouth—trying to keep them there, trying to put them back. His face went glossy with tears as a bubble of blood welled from his lips.

"My teeth," he said. "Somebody please help me. They're all gone."

THE HEROINE of Margaret Drabble's new novel, *The Realms of Gold*,[4] also has an interest in teeth. Frances Wingate is an archaeologist who carries her lover's false teeth around in her bosom.

> She liked the feel of them, Karel's teeth resting gently and delicately and wirily against her soft evening breast, they kept her company. She had one low-cut dress that she was rather fond of, a soft black one, soft black wool, and one night at a party she caught a man in the act of staring down her cleavage and meeting, entranced and horrified, the sight of Karel's glaring teeth, the guardians of her virtue.

And she herself, at the beginning of the book, suffers from an appalling toothache which causes her to cancel a lecture in Paris and brings her home to her children.

However *The Realms of Gold* is not about teeth, but about families and family relationships. Frances is divorced; her lover Karel is married to Joy; during the course of the book Joy will leave Karel; Karel and Frances will be united; Joy will find a relationship with another woman. Frances's father, Sir Frank Ollerenshaw, is Vice-Chancellor of a university; when she becomes ill she goes to stay with her parents ("There was nowhere else to turn. She had no real friends, only colleagues and acquaintances"), slipping without apparent difficulty into a truce with her demanding mother. Then she goes to stay with her brother Hugh, in his cottage in the Cotswolds, where by a bright open fire they can talk about themselves, their pasts, their children. Hugh, who drinks, is a grandfather, for his son Stephen has married while still at university: Stephen finds a special confidante in Frances. The Ollerenshaws are a large, sprawling Midland clan, and many of those we meet don't know of the existence of the others. David Ollerenshaw is a geologist, bumping into Frances on one of her archaeological trips, thinking geological thoughts in solitary places. Janet Bird *née* Ollerenshaw is leading a life of unrelieved desperation, with a baby and a sarcastic, bullying husband, on a new estate; during the course of the novel she meets Frances, through whom she "came to believe that

[4] *The Realms of Gold.* By MARGARET DRABBLE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.50.

POWER AND POLICY IN CHINA

PARRIS H. CHANG

Taking issue with the "Mao in command" notion —an assumption explicit or implict in many writings analyzing Chinese politics—this book presents a picture of widening, concentric circles of Chinese leaders involved in policy disputes and decisions. Thus policy-making in China is shown to be a complicated process of conflict-resolution and consensus-building which—despite significant differences—has some similarities to political processes elsewhere.

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instead of confronting a life of boredom, she was merely biding her time." And there are other Ollerenshaws, one of whom, a cracked and difficult old woman, dies alone and neglected, causing a brief national scandal and bringing much of the family together for the first time. In a kind of afterthought, as if to show that life is not all a coming together and that every family has its hereditary curse, Stephen kills himself and his baby. Fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, husbands, wives, cousins, nephews, nieces, aunts, and uncles: the roles and labels are of special importance. "I mean to say", says Lady Ollerenshaw, "do I *look* like a great-grandmother?"

> Families [says Frances to herself]. Incomprehensible. What was it David had said to her the night before, about a couple who were going to visit their dying mother in Algeria? And here was she, bound on a similar errand. Ancient migrations.

The ancient migration which takes her into her past is a kind of archaeology, which she sees as

> a fruitless attempt to prove the possibility of the future through the past. We seek a Utopia in the past, a possible if not an ideal society. We seek golden worlds from which we are banished, they recede infinitely, for there never was a golden world, there was never anything but toil and subsistence, cruelty and dullness.

But these golden worlds, the realms of gold of the title, are the principal force in the novel, pulling and pushing, dissolving and reappearing, like the octopus she sees in a laboratory at the beginning of the book. Frances has a conversation with an Italian anthropologist in which she "could produce hardly any examples of first marriages with offspring lasting any length of time"; she "could no longer admit the concept of a two-parent family"; she has brightly emancipated views about such matters. But the family, when it reaches out with its telegrams, has to be answered: flights must be booked, hotel rooms must be cancelled.

The best drawn of Margaret Drabble's characters have lives of their own; they are unpredictable, and they are believable. Their limits are those of their author. The female characters are treated in greater depth than the males, the males tend to be seen through female eyes, and when an effort is made to get inside a male character—David the geologist—the result is one-dimensional and wishy-washy; we see him in nothing like the same relief. (We are taken into a ladies' lavatory with Frances, but modesty forbids a woman novelist from going inside a gents'.) Although there are some distracting and, I believe, mistaken distancing devices in the narrative, the author's resting-place in the book is in the consciousness of her main character, Frances. We are given Frances's history, feelings, perceptions and opinions in profuse detail, in so much detail, in fact, that one longs for a little reticence, for some sense of economy of means, for a meaning to be given through the narrative rather than simply being stated. It is a narrative eye with a wide-angle lens, getting in all the peripheral goings-on which make for naturalism. The result is the longest of the novels in this batch, a novel not unpleasingly old-fashioned in its methods, a novel which means to be read and enjoyed and understood; but in the last resort, I feel, it is not a novel which breaks new ground for its author.

MARGARET DRABBLE writes about an objective world, the outlines of which may sometimes be sketchy but whose existence we do not doubt. Not so Beryl Bainbridge: here all is solipsism, a world which may or may not exist, characters who may be invented by other characters, even feelings which succeed other feelings so rapidly as to cause the reader to doubt that they were ever felt at all. Ann, a single girl living in Hampstead, is the only reality in *Sweet William*.[5] The beautiful William who one day

[5] *Sweet William*. By BERYL BAINBRIDGE. Duckworth, £2.95.

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climbs into her bed with such assurance is a shadowy presence who comes and goes with explanations which never stand up to enquiry. He is divorced; he has left Sheila; no, he's married to Edna; he seems to be getting off with Pamela; and what about Mrs Kershaw, and even—heavens—Chuck, the American? The ground's unsteady, the walls not safe to lean on. Even mummy, who might be expected to help a girl in time of trouble, is an unreliable creature from a grotesque dream:

> "Darling", cried Mrs Walton, throwing open the door and laughing immoderately. In her cocktail dress of green rayon, her earrings, she was every inch the hostess. Across her nose was an orange smear of powder, short-sightedly applied.

And William is more than careless and forgetful. He's possessive and malevolent, cabling Ann's boring fiancé in America to prevent him returning to marry her. Perhaps the fact that he seems to have made Ann pregnant is proof of his reality. But no, the baby turns out to be Gerald's, not William's: all that love-making, on the floors of taxis or in hospital waiting rooms, may never have occurred at all.

Sweet William is more subdued and less bizarre than *The Bottle Factory Outing*, but the same slightly loony sensibility is at work, and there is a similar atmosphere. It's a world of twilight, peopled by indistinct figures who don't quite connect, communicating in words which can't be taken at face value. Ann's feelings are always on the surface; she is volatile, emotionally unstable, lacking a cultural framework, without a history. She is an instinctive existentialist: everything has to be invented and experienced for the first time. Words often fail her; language and syntax are imprecise; the big Truth isn't there. But the little truths sometimes slip through:

> There was the expected moment on the platform as the train began to crawl away with the little displeased face, lonely at the carriage window.

Easy Virtue

On Doctorow's "Ragtime"—By JONATHAN RABAN

EXOGAMY IS THE MOST basic of all principles for maintaining vitality within the tribe, and the novel has been marrying-out for as long as it has been a distinct literary form. Nineteenth-century realism copulated fruitfully, and sometimes fatally, with social science: prose fiction was justified as "a valid mode of social research", a phrase which goes rather better in French than it does in English. More recently, a novel by Christine Brooke-Rose, *Thru*, climbed into bed with, and expired struggling in the arms of, structural linguistics. John Berger's *G* was full of bits of old art criticism which he had once published as essays in *New Society*. And so on.

But the longest-lasting and most incestuous of the novel's many marriages and affairs has been with journalism. In Dickens, journalism and fiction lie uneasily side by side: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for instance, is fiction proper for its first third, and savage journalism thereafter. Wells, fighting a losing battle in his correspondence with Henry James, tried to justify the novel as a form of journalism. In America, a whole school of novelists who had trained as newspapermen—Dreiser, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Farrell—treated the novel as if it were an on-the-spot report of imaginary events. The "New Journalism" of Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese and Hunter Thompson has taken to treating real events with the verbal licence (though without the moral involvement) of fiction. More impressively, Norman Mailer found a latent novel plot in the actions of the undisguised characters who make up *The Armies of the Night*. The immense popularity of Frederick Forsyth's "novels" seems to reside in the facility with which they marry fictional stories with clear resolutions and swift dénouements to a styleless, copiously researched writing of a kind normally produced by nameless teams of *Sunday Times* "Insight" reporters.

And now, all-but-drowned in an oily marinade of advance publicity, comes *Ragtime*,[1] "the most widely discussed and the most critically acclaimed novel of our times." Making a classic act of proposal on his knees, E. L. Doctorow announces:

> I want to break out of the little world of personal experience which has bound the novel, to escape that suffocating closeness to the characters. History and journalism have taken on that great ongoing energy of narrative which we see in Defoe and the German chronicler Kleist, and history is too important to be left to the historians. . . .

What exactly are these powerful attractions that journalism holds for the novelist? First, its

[1] *Ragtime*. By E. L. DOCTOROW. Macmillan, £3.50.

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readability and its readership. "I want *Ragtime* to be read by people who do not normally read books", says Doctorow, who might have added that these people *do* seem to have an unbounded appetite for zippily written colour features on almost any kind of documentary-historical topic. Secondly, as Doctorow suggests in his statement, journalism has a blessed detachment from the objects it describes. The journalist is a metaphysical freeloader: he can ride on experience without paying his fare in personal commitment or personal exposure. Thirdly, journalism is at ease—one might say that it is too much at ease—with the Big Events of Our Times. It is no accident that the words Drama and Tragedy figure more frequently now on newspaper headlines than they do anywhere else. Novelists fight shy of days that shake the world; journalists thrive on them, and have a useful talent for making even the dullest day a world-shaker when occasion demands it. I take Doctorow's point about Defoe: instead of *Robinson Crusoe*, we have that excellent extended piece of feature journalism, Piers Paul Read's *Alive*.

But what is *Ragtime* instead of? It is tempting to say that it is the newest portmanteau alternative to Grace Metalious, the colour section of the *New York Sunday Times*, and *The Art of Fiction*. Doctorow is a jackdaw writer. He has feathered his nest with bits and pieces drawn from all sorts of disparate sources, some of them classy and some of them not. The main question that *Ragtime* raises is whether it succeeds in fusing its separate components into a single new object. I think that, despite its evident ambitiousness, its considerable finesse and its cool wit, it does not. Its relationship with journalism and history is more of a whirlwind affair than a marriage.

In synopsis, *Ragtime* is a brilliant conversation piece. Take the period between 1902 and 1914. Think of all the people who might have been in and around New York at the time, and who have lived sufficiently vividly in the public memory (or at least in the Sunday supplements) to have become figures of popular mythology. Think of . . . Freud, Jung, Houdini, Henry Ford, Pierpont Morgan, Commander Peary, Evelyn Nesbit, Emma Goldman, Booker T. Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, Coalhouse Walker. . . . *Coalhouse Walker?* Ah, I was coming to that. Suppose you let the lives of these famous people intertwine with those of an obscure suburban family in New Rochelle—an imaginary family, whose only names are Mother, Father, Mother's Younger Brother, and so on—and let the famous and the obscure, the real and the unreal, all mingle on the same stage. Think of the effect that will have on the other characters and events in the narrative—on the Coalhouse Walkers, on the siege of the Pierpont Morgan Library. The famous dead will cast their blaze of authentic publicity on the merely imaginary people; the existence of make-believe characters will cast doubt on the reality of persons and things that actually happened. We shall be moving in a territory that is neither history nor fiction, but mythology. Real and imagined worlds will dissolve into one. The besetting and wounding question of fiction—"But is it true?"—will become an irrelevance.

Wow! says the girl from Vassar. That's really *neat*. But as John Barth pointed out some time ago, the modern, or at least the modernist, novel is in constant danger of petering out into a one-sentence idea whose actual performance over the length of a book is of little consequence. (His examples were things like "Think of The Johnson Administration by Andy Warhol" and other whimsical notions based on Borges's exploration of how *Don Quixote* would read had it been written by Pierre Menard rather than Cervantes. The Pseuds Corner term for these *jeux d'esprit* is Conceptual Art.) On this level, *Ragtime* is an immense success. When the first rumours of it were filtering out from the advance extracts published in *New American Review*, I heard of it as one might hear a new joke that is going the rounds of the office. Here was this new book that had Freud and Jung riding through the Tunnel of Love at Coney Island together . . . fantastic! What did they do in the Tunnel of Love, I asked. They . . . well . . . they ride through the Tunnel of Love. It's the *idea*, don't you see? Indeed, in the book itself, this memorable occasion takes up exactly as much space as it was allotted in my informant's report. *Freud and Jung took a boat together through the Tunnel of Love.* And *Ragtime* is chock-a-block with glittering, unexamined conceits of that kind—little firecrackers that glow with suggestive, but finally fraudulent brilliance, because they can be pursued no further than the sentence which encapsulates them.

THE BRIGHTNESS of *Ragtime*—and it is a consistently bright, thoroughly readable book—tends to be of this variety. It flares up on the page, and as quickly dies. Begged questions are lost in the hiss of the next firework. Doctorow is never less than a stylish writer; but whether he actually has a style is questionable. Here, for instance, is a characteristic dazzling sentence:

> The champagne was drugged. When she woke up the following morning the effulgence of White's manhood lay over her thighs like a baker's glaze.

Or this one, on the society hostess, Mrs Stuyvesant Fish:

> Shading his eyes [Houdini] saw bearing down on him

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> Mrs Fish herself, a clutch of jewelled feathers rising from her piled hair, ropes of pearls swinging pendulously from her neck, a witticism forming on her lips like the bubbles of an epileptic.

I find both these at once admirable and perplexing. Their sharpness and verbal ingenuity are undeniable. But there is an odd dissociation between the writer and his object. The manoeuvre in the first sentence is typical of Doctorow: his first punch is a piece of cod-Euphuism ("the effulgence of White's manhood") which would seem to have the writer condescending with Olympian indifference to the small doings of his characters; his second ("like a baker's glaze") is a riveting exactitude in attentive close-up. But together the two have the effect of controverting each other, as if the writer himself was slithering out of the responsibility for his own observations. His demolition job on Mrs Fish is another standard Doctorow tactic: a succession of cliché phrases laid like ground bait around the hook of a devilishly clever remark. It is impossible to deduce a sensibility from behind this kind of prose. It is connected neither to the character through whose eyes we are supposed to be looking, nor, in any meaningful sense, to the author. Here is language caught in the act of freeloading —a skilful mode of writing which is indigenous to journalism but which tastes unsatisfyingly bland in a novel. When Doctorow escapes "the little world of personal experience which has bound the novel", he moves into the big world of the smart colour feature—a freedom which is disputable, to say the least.

Whatever its supposed limitations, at least the world of personal experience operates to a system of strenuous internal logic. In most novels, things happen because they are necessary to the narrative, because the situation dictates or requires them. In *Ragtime*, they just happen. Here are two more typical ploys:

> Coincidentally this was the time in our history when the morose novelist Theodore Dreiser was suffering terribly from the bad reviews and negligible sales of his first book. . . .

> Meanwhile men were beginning to take planes into the air, or race automobiles that went sixty miles an hour. . . .

These *coincidentallys* and *meanwhiles* are no coincidence; they are basic materials in the fabric of *Ragtime* and they betray the essential triviality of its relationship to the public historical world in which Doctorow has invested so much faith. He grasps arbitrarily and wildly at public facts and events like a man trying to hitch lifts on the wings of passing eagles. The first third of the novel (and it is worth mentioning that Doctorow performs most of his tricks early on, and *Ragtime* soon subsides into a quite conventionally-told,

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moderately exciting story) hops and skips from private to public, from one batch of characters to another, by means of these spurious linkages. Sometimes Doctorow has the air of a frantic amateur stage manager who finds that he has lost half his cast by the middle of Act Two of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. "And what of Tateh and his little girl?" he enquires, in the first sentence of Chapter Twelve. To which the reader can only reply, Well, *you* should know. Sometimes the sheer difficulty of trying to keep a whole chunk of American history on the go leads him to try, Busby Berkeley fashion, for set-pieces which will keep the entire cast doing the same thing at the same time.

> All across the continent merchants pressed the large round keys of their registers.

And woe betide the unfortunate merchant who happened to be picking his nose at the time.

The idea of mixing public and private, imagined and real, is eloquent in synopsis (as it is eloquent in the many adulatory reviews which *Ragtime* has collected). But in execution, it turns out to be terribly clumsy. The various bits of the novel look as if they had been joined to one another by strips of sticky tape, and Doctorow has made no particular effort to match the bias of the materials. His private characters are fey-sentimental, and the period New York in which they live—a city of heartrending poverty, gaslit colour, etcetera—is by Malamud (in *The Magic Barrel* and *The Assistant*), out of Henry Roth (in *Call It Sleep*) and Abraham Cahan (in what is really the first major descriptive novel of the Lower East Side, *The Rise of David Levinsky*). Passages like this, in which the real Evelyn Nesbit visits the tenement where the imaginary Tateh lives with his daughter, are simply *ersatz*-writing—touching, so long as one is not too familiar with the New York Jewish novels which have done the same thing a hundred times before and ten times better.

> Tateh was scandalised by her visit. He stood in only his shirt and pants held up by suspenders and he wore house slippers. He insisted that the front door be left open despite the rank winds that blew up the stairwell, and quickly put on his jacket and shoes. He hurriedly made up his cot, throwing over it a brightly coloured spread. The little girl lay on a brass bed in the other room. She was ill with a fever. The two rooms were lit by candle. The bedroom, although it had a window, was almost as dark as the front room. It looked out on an air shaft. The whole place was no bigger than a closet. Yet as Evelyn's eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness she perceived that the home was scrupulously clean.

But it is the public characters who are the least satisfactory. Doctorow has not reinvented or reimagined them. He has bought their crude popular images off the peg, and simply put them, on rows of hangers, into his book. So Henry Ford is a likable loud-mouthed philistine with a cigar plugged permanently into his mouth. Houdini, "The last of the great shameless mother-lovers, a nineteenth century movement that included such men as Poe, John Brown, Lincoln and James McNeill Whistler", is a shivering obsessive. Pierpont Morgan is abstracted and dotty. Evelyn Nesbit is sad and beautiful. Emma Goldman is a dumpy Women's Libber with a rough tongue and a warm heart. If History was too important to be left to historians, Doctorow has made it over to the most orthodox school of caricaturists. He has stripped his public characters of their individuality, and their only claim to life in *Ragtime* is that their names were once attached to real people. As befits such Comic Cuts creations, the humour that can be got out of them is of a very giggly kind. Pierpont Morgan "said to his aides I want to meet that tinkering fellow. What's his name. The motorcar mechanic. Ford." When Houdini learns to fly in Germany, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand stops his car to watch the escape artist circling in the sky. After Houdini has landed, he is introduced to the Archduke, who congratulates him on the invention of the aeroplane. History could have afforded Doctorow less trifling entertainments.

THE POINT AT WHICH the book really settles down is where it starts on the story of Coalhouse Walker, the stiff, arrogant Negro, whose injured pride is aroused by having his Model T Ford vandalised by a gang of Irish firemen and who ends up turning the Morgan Library into a vast bomb which he threatens to explode if his demands aren't met. Here Doctorow's prose is as efficiently gripping as, say, Peter Benchley's in *Jaws*, and questions of depth and character are kept at bay by the race of the plot.

That is the trouble with *Ragtime*. The moment one begins to question it on any grounds of serious literary merit, it falls apart—a cunning, fragile house of cards. Its major interest lies in the way in which it suggests a recipe for the contemporary bestseller. It is written to be read fast: too much attention on the reader's part kills it stone-dead. It is a splendid book to talk *about*—a big, party-size idea which is itself stuffed with attractive little ideas. It is designed to titillate the imagination without overstretching it. Its prose will present no difficulties, and will offer numerous small pleasures, to those who prefer reading magazines to reading books. There will be a very large number of people who know little, and care less, about either the novel or history, who will see *Ragtime* as the most dazzlingly sophisticated exploration of both the novel and history that they have ever read.

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Quotidian Tasks

New Poetry—By DOUGLAS DUNN

PETER PORTER'S poems have always represented the authority of the articulate and hallowed. A disturbing sanity has been at the centre of his work. Concern for cultural values and the dilemmas of metropolitan life has not led to whatever ossified styles "new geniuses" might have expected from him. Porter is a man of at least two artistic temperaments. Culturally he is conservative; artistically he is adventurous, and though his staple is simplified baroque, it has been seen capable of taking whatever weight of invention Porter would like it to carry. Though I have reservations about the extent to which Porter is willing to be a diehard in defence of his particular interpretation of "cultural values", there is no denying the conviction and strength of their expressions.

When Porter is self-effacing, or testing the state of mind of a persona against what it assumes to be ideal, there is a minimum of self and only the appearance of effacement. His "I" is seldom that of himself entirely; there is a strong fictional endeavour which gives his eager imagination its chance of freedom. "Ode to Afternoon" contains this verse—

> *You must make capital out of despair:*
> *real pain is never art,*
> *turn instead to quotidian tasks,*
> *Grub Street at the obsessional!*

It would be truer to say that Porter's work confronts what Lowell means by "the heroism of the quotidian" with extraordinary experiences of culture and more profound perceptions of life than ordinary life can survive without admitting to its envy of the glamour of the Gods.

> *To have trod on ground in happiness*
> *Is to be shaken by the true immortals,*

he writes, in "Good Vibes." A necessary part of his moral schema is that the best that life offers is close to what life offers in its ordinary way. It is when Porter is concerned to make pronouncements on such subjects that his language loses poetic shape and becomes aphoristic in a no-man's land between prose and poetry. The two lines above, for instance, read like a motto found in a Christmas cracker hand-made by Socrates.

Living in a Calm Country,[1] though, has more examples of Porter avoiding that characteristic fault than ever before. Rhythmically, he is more assured; he is altogether closer to the mastery of idiom his ambitious work has been demanding. In "An Australian Garden" there is far more presentation than statement even though he is intent on making what for him is an important meaning. His temporary return to the Australia of his birth—

> *to the surprises*
> *of childhood, the sun-slatted boredom,*
> *castles of the kingdom of bananas*

—looks like having been a necessary catalyst to his imagination. Going home is also part of personal realignment: no discovery in poetry is ever as important as a re-discovery. Porter seems to have recovered respect for his background and nationality, for a chance to recognise—in "An Australian Garden" and "On First Looking into Chapman's Hesiod"—a country in which definitions of provincial and colonial can now only be made in relation to Australia itself instead of the world outside it.

APART FROM THE FACT that his poetry is getting better and better, a return to Australia has made no radical change in Porter's state of mind. From his Australian pastorals, he emerges as the same person whose nationality is The City—

> *Some of us feel at home nowhere,*
> *Others in one generation fuse with the land . . . .*
> *Sparrows acclimatize but I still seek*
> *The permanently upright city where*
> *Speech is nature and plants conceive in pots . . . .*

which is close, perhaps deliberately, to a deracinated, cosmopolitan ambition, close to an overstated urbanity, close to eccentricity, but felt strongly on behalf of a civilisation too much enamoured of "alternatives" instead of improvement of material facts. There is an underlying opposition to the wilful primitivism in 20th-century art and life which is itself a reflection of distaste for a European civilisation thought to have already failed.

One side of Porter is simply a sweeping cultural nostalgia:

> *take this to heart!*
> *The day Columbus discovered America*
> *Was the day Piero della Francesca died.*

(But Porter should have taken heart at this coincidence: the year of the American Declara-

[1] *Living in a Calm Country*. By PETER PORTER. Oxford University Press, £1.50.

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tion of Independence was also the year of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. History is its own oracle.)

Another side is his impatient but dark outlook on frivolity.

A professor writes a book on the third period
Of his great composer; next door, the new genius
Creates relevant art with Woolworth balloons—
The solemn thinkers are the ones with hate.

Porter has had his fun with caricatures of that sort before. Cultural antagonisms, swift doses of polemic, while they can be amusing, usually result in overstatements which the concise nature of verse turns into misleading headlines. In "Dreamtime" the writing is more complex, though its ambivalence still leaves us in no doubt that the garrulous would-be Lawrentian of the last line is still, in Porter's view, a palpable threat.

They will try to get you to dream a new world
For them, one made clean by courage. You
May need to give a hostage as you do now
When you see approaching the perennial bore
Who is host to nature and a lord of change.

To "dream a new world" is not a bad prospectus in itself. Porter might have been conned by particular representatives of change. Why such persons are shifty and boring is more interesting than that they are; and, for the sake of satire, Porter has neglected the solemn, serious and authentic thought which his representatives trivialise.

ALAN BROWNJOHN'S SATIRE is close to Porter's in its motives. His poems are more closely specified in terms of class, his subject the cultural tics, behavioural deceptions and disasters of a middle class who have the education to provide themselves with affluence and a set of *The Lord of the Rings* but not with knowledge. Though he can dismiss the characters he creates or speaks through, his energy is not that of the sneer nor his tone that of moral superiority. Porter's satire is frightened rather than frightening, Brownjohn's more one of sentiment, with a sense of his own complicity, sharing the bewilderment of his personae that their lives should actually be the way they have made them, or the way they have been made for them.

Few books of verse are as thematically sustained as *A Song of Good Life*.[2] It is based on an exchange between the Clown and Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night:*

Clown: Would you have a love-song, or a song of good life?
Sir Toby: A love-song, a love-song.

But the "song of good life" comes first, and turns out to be fraught with mismanagements, frustrations, deceptions, disillusionments, and exploitations. It is a bleaker vision of contemporary life than anything else Brownjohn has done. In his monologues especially, what comes across is a humanity which can only be rescued from barrenness by the ineffective pity and enhanced humanity of an observer. Two excellent poems—"Vital" and "Twilight"—prove my point.

With such gifts for dramatic writing, it is hardly surprising that Brownjohn would one day write a play. "A Love Song" forms the middle part of the book. Love, too, turns out to be as eminently capable of disfigurement as "good life." The play is good, and could go proudly into anyone's repertoire. What begins to bother me about Brownjohn's writing, however, is its imposed limitation to a particular form of middle-class society which is the most vulnerable to supplement-culture and packaged ideas. That may be what he knows best, and he certainly deals with it exhaustively and with considerable imagination. But concern like Brownjohn's ought to lead somewhere. Otherwise the figure of the poet rehearsing his humanity, or his acute insight into cultural dilapidation, continuously exposing the same inanities and tragedies, becomes mercilessly submerged in the milieu of those he observes or attacks. Brownjohn's range is wider than that stricture implies, while Porter, too, includes several poems created by a dimension of his imagination which is not the one I've characterised. Brownjohn's "The Ship of Death" and "Of Dancing", more general or personal inventions, might suggest to some that this is the direction he ought to follow.

What I should myself prefer to see in both Brownjohn's and Porter's poems is exactly that dream of a new world Porter has already decided to be impossible or undesirable. It is the most extreme risk a poet can take. If rooted in what is already observable, it does not deny fact, or the quotidian, or the disinterested imagination.

[2] *A Song of Good Life*. By ALAN BROWNJOHN. Secker & Warburg, £2.90.

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Neither poet is likely to believe in the efficacy of what I've mentioned. Both appear as victims of the social and cultural anxieties they express. And that I find disquieting. For if what I believe is true of their work, then it suggests that reality (whatever that is, and whatever forms it takes) is getting the better of imagination, which is the substance of poems.

A GENERATION which first published in an era still properly thought of as post-war might, historically, have been interested in just such a socially imaginative poetry; and yet "the Movement" refused to have anything to do with whatever smacked of idealism, or the grandiloquence associated with it. Older than Porter or Brownjohn, D. J. Enright would appear one of the "Movement" poets likely to have encouraged this approach. His earlier poems can be seen as attacks on large gestures of almost any kind. His characteristic assertions have been for the rights and individualities of the common man; mishaps perpetrated on ordinary citizens are seen as the consequences of those who "thought big." He has never paid much attention to the possibility they "thought wrong."

For all their avowed certainties, Enright's points of view now begin to look a shade more controversial than they were in the 1950s and early 1960s. Wisdom, which Enright has—or it is an attractive ploy for him to pretend he has it—can, when showing itself as satisfied with its "own reward", act as little more than a warning that it is dangerous to be anything other than cunning, reserved and cynical. His stoic, shifty fortitude might be nothing more than a consistent overstating of the negative side of his mind's conclusions. He writes as a Machiavellian soliloquiser speaks; except, of course, that this soliloquiser also wears motley, a partnership which is responsible for the marvellous readability of his poems. Characteristic utterances:

Sad work. Sad cure!—to make a verse of it,
A footnote in the grave. Every blessing's mixed.

Or

Floods of light are about to be cast
Where hitherto there was no darkness.

Enright's tone of voice, which is important in his poems, is usually called "laconic" or "mordant." It could be said to be much more than these so-called "anti-poetic" terms generally mean. In an epoch when those who maintain liberal, humane values have been constantly on

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the defensive, his tone sounds representative of that defence, bemused and indignant but careful not to overdo either. Elsewhere I've said Enright's tone is like Brecht's in his poems. A coincidence of that sort leads me to believe Enright is as political a poet as we've got, a poet of suspicions, of sly counter-jabs, a poet who points out exceptions the political rules are unprepared to include.

Technically, Enright is adroit. On the other hand he can be mistaken by some as a poet devoid of technical interest; he seldom turns in a sustained metrical performance, or indulges in pan-American experiment. His technique is guided by and supports tones of voice needed for his slyly offensive and defensive patterns of thought. *Sad Ires*[3] marks no new stage in his writing, which is a disappointment after *The Terrible Shears* seemed to promise a more bruisingly local treatment of his themes. The book is good enough, and two poems ("R-and-R" and "Meeting a Person") are among his best.

GAVIN EWART'S VERSE has sometimes been thought too close to doggerel for comfort, or too facile. These opinions ignore Ewart's poetic temperament. His varieties of comic verse are, like Enright's tones of voice, technical expressions of a seriously presented mischief. Given half a chance—a pension, say—Ewart could be a trouble-maker of the first water. The air of carelessness about his poems is nothing other than cheek, and, indeed, an "air of" rather than "carelessness." In his new book, *Be My Guest!*,[4] "The Larkin Automatic Car Wash", for instance, imitates the stanza of "The Whitsun Weddings" with as tight a control of colloquial idiom as the original. Ewart, then, can be as metrically tight as he likes; that he doesn't always like is more to the point. He is fond of variety and the inane perspectives created by out-of-place metres like the limerick, as in "Reading Keats . . . ."

> *There's a gnome in the garden,*
> *a young man gets a hardon*
> *with a girl who is full of Romance.*
> *Life goes on, ordinary,*
> *milk comes up from the dairy*
> *and a batsman's correcting his stance.*

Peculiarly English to the point of rating "charm" as an important poetic effect, Ewart is courageous in his reliance on *verse*. He is closer to Thomas Hood than any other poet I can think of, and in "The Afterflu Afterlife" he rhymes in the virtuoso manner of the Hood beloved by Auden. Each verse has the same five rhymes. The poem includes the deathless

> *We heard the dead word "troth" once in Arbroath*

which may well be intended as the most blatant line-for-the-sake-of-a-rhyme in English. But Ewart is that sort of poet—gamey, exploiting what looks inconsiderable for the highly considerable purpose of verbal amusement, some of which is satirical.

"To the Slow Drum" is an elegy for Auden. Written in the ritualistic trochaic metre Auden himself used for the third part of "In Memory of W. B. Yeats", the poem has a virtually ecclesiastical strength. The processional solemnity of the lines make it into a private ceremony, and the poem is the most convincing metrical performance in the book.

But the oddness of Ewart's poems is, in my opinion, more significant than showing an eccentricity for verse. His sonnets, for example, are called "The *So-Called* Sonnets", while his versions of four of Horace's Odes "were made on the principle that the word-order of the Latin should not on any account be changed." Inventiveness and disregard for what prevails as established definition or propriety are necessary subversions in any society. Ewart's rebellions are enacted through technique, and seem to me to embody a serious disgruntlement at the state of poetry and attitudes towards it. Ewart's chosen ways of writing may amount to a meaning, that any style is insecure, that—with the exception of elegy—an appropriate style is likely to be boring. There is certainly a feeling about his poems that suggests Ewart considers seriousness a wildly overrated expectation which can only lead to social diseases such as piles, pantheism, and under-arm bowling.

[3] *Sad Ires*. By D. J. ENRIGHT. Chatto & Windus, £2.00.

[4] *Be My Guest!* By GAVIN EWART. Trigram Press, £2.95, paper £1.75.

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A POET UNLIKELY TO INDULGE in even the most guardedly implicit belief in the insecurity of verse is Vernon Scannell. Far from being entirely of an earnest turn of mind—he has always had an eye for the funny and incongruous—Scannell's new collection *The Loving Game*[5] is a sustained treatment of the darker sides of love and marriage. One of the best poems begins,

Endlessly the stream slides past,
Jellies each white flat stone
Which stares through its slithering window at
The sky's smeared monotone.

Despite the authority of these lines and the image they present, there is a decidedly retrospective look about Scannell's technique. It acts on his writing in much the same way as the water on the stones in the four lines just quoted. Assurance goes some way towards compensating for a style of writing that, if contemporary in subjects, is hardly of this minute in means. The archaic self-confidence of the title of "The Poet's Tongue" leads us to expect overwriting and a romantic overview of the poet's linguistic repertoire, the

great arsenal which stores
Blunt cudgels with the very latest thing,
Romantic swords employed in ancient wars
And complicated engines needing great
Skill and practice to manipulate.

The tastelessness with which that metaphor is sustained for five lines is an indication of how Scannell can brush aside an excellent sense of the demotic and colloquial—which he has the patience to organise properly—with worn-out metaphors a little less than quaint. Such practices are induced by the idea of craftsmanship Scannell holds, by an ill-considered reliance on metre. Winter swings an axe, for example; or, "The spendthrift sun throws down its gold"; and the sun is said to have a "brass shout." What expressions of that sort have to do with craftsmanship is beyond me.

While it may be Scannell's intention to transfer more or less ordinary situations into a heightened poetic level through stating the mundane in association with extraordinary perceptions, the result is often the creation of a "poetry world" in a "poetry language." "Marriage Counsel" is one of the exceptions. Language, in metre and rhyme, flows close enough to speech in a poem which does demand that language be familiar and real. That someone other than the poet is speaking the poem makes it more difficult for the poet himself to throw in a few poeticky metaphors, to cast swine before his pearls. Having managed these virtues, the poem's severity of meaning is more than credible, but effective.

[5] *The Loving Game*. By VERNON SCANNELL. Robson Books, £1.50.

AUTHORS

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was awarded the 1975 Booker Prize for her novel *Heat and Dust*. "How I Became a Holy Mother" is the title story of a new volume of short stories which her publishers, John Murray, will bring out in the spring of 1976.

Michael Wharton's ENCOUNTER profiles of the characters he created in his *Daily Telegraph* "Peter Simple" column include "Dr Heinz Kiosk" and "Rentacrowd" (April and May 1975). The illustrations are by ffolkes.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Is the Political Jesus Dead?

By Hyam Maccoby

THERE IS A WIDESPREAD IDEA that Jewish scholars sedulously ignored the New Testament, or were somehow afraid to read it. This is quite mistaken. Indeed it would be truer to say that the first beginnings of the scientific study of the Gospels are to be found in the writings of medieval Jewish scholars such as Joseph Kimchi, Hasdai Crescas, Profiat Duran and Isaac Troki. Here for the first time the Gospels were studied as human historical documents; discrepancies were noted, the bias of the redactors allowed for, authentic underlying strata laid bare.

The Jewish authors of the Middle Ages were moved, of course, by a powerful motive: the desire to combat Christian missionary efforts and to defend Judaism. But although this motive could have led to polemics against the Gospels themselves, this did not in fact happen, at least not in the more scholarly treatments of the subject. For Jewish authors found that the best ammunition against the claims of Christianity could be derived from the Gospels themselves; on an objective reading, they contained many passages which contradicted the teachings of the Church about the life and mission of Jesus. The Gospels, it was pointed out, were not homogeneous. Certain passages reflected a genuine knowledge of the religious and historical circumstances of Jesus's time; but other passages superimposed an inauthentic interpretation which could only have come from a different time and milieu. Some of the points made by these medieval commentators have become established truths of the scientific criticism which rose to a flood in Europe in the 19th century (though it was very rare for any acknowledgment of priority to be made). Other points have become established only as part of the "Jewish" view of the Gospels, expressed in more than 300 publications since the 18th century.

The "Jewish" view is far from monolithic, and every contributor has his own idiosyncratic version of it. Also many distinguished non-Jewish writers have contributed to it, including H. S. Reimarus[1], F. C. Baur and recently S. G. F. Brandon. But certain basic features can be seen in the viewpoint of all the writers of the "Jewish" school, from Graetz, Chwolson and Geiger in the 19th century to Joseph Klausner, Solomon Zeitlin and Paul Winter in the 20th,[2] features which derive ultimately from the pioneers of the Middle Ages.

THESE FEATURES may be summarised briefly as follows:

1. Jesus did not claim to be God. His claim to be the "Messiah" (or "Christ") was simply a claim to the Jewish throne.

2. Jesus therefore did not commit any offence of "blasphemy" or idolatry in Jewish law.

3. Jesus did not abrogate the Jewish law. On the contrary, he upheld it and was an observant follower of it all his life, as were his disciples, the Twelve, and his immediate successors in the Jerusalem Church. His advocacy of leniency in the *interpretation* of the law (*e.g.* in the Sabbath laws and in the *lex talionis*) was typical of the Pharisee teaching of his time, and would not therefore have aroused criticism from the Pharisees.

4. The "trial" of Jesus by the Jewish Sanhedrin never took place. The accounts of it given in the Gospels are contradictory and absurd. One Gospel, that of John, does not mention a Sanhedrin trial at all. Since Jesus did not commit blasphemy or any other religious offence, there was no occasion for a Sanhedrin trial, since the Sanhedrin was a purely religious tribunal.

5. Jesus died on the cross, which was the typical death of a rebel against Rome. He was crucified by the decision of the Roman governor, and the actual execution was carried out by Roman soldiers. Many other would-be Messiahs of the period died in the same way. Crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish punishment. The enemies of Jesus were the Romans, not the Jews, though a few Jewish political "quislings" (*e.g.* the High Priest, who was a Roman appointee) may have cooperated in his arrest.

6. The Gospels are concerned to blame the Jews for the death of Jesus and to exonerate the Romans, and that is why they manufacture a *religious* conflict between Jesus and his fellow-Jews. The reasons for this concern to placate the Romans are to be sought in the political circumstances of the time when the Gospels were

[1] Herman Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) was the earliest non-Jewish supporter of the "Jewish position." He did not dare to publish his work *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* in his lifetime. Parts of it were published after his death by Lessing, who supported his position.

[2] Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1925; Solomon Zeitlin, *Who Crucified Jesus?*, 1964; Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, 1961.

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written (or rather re-written), *i.e.* the aftermath of the disastrous Jewish War against Rome.

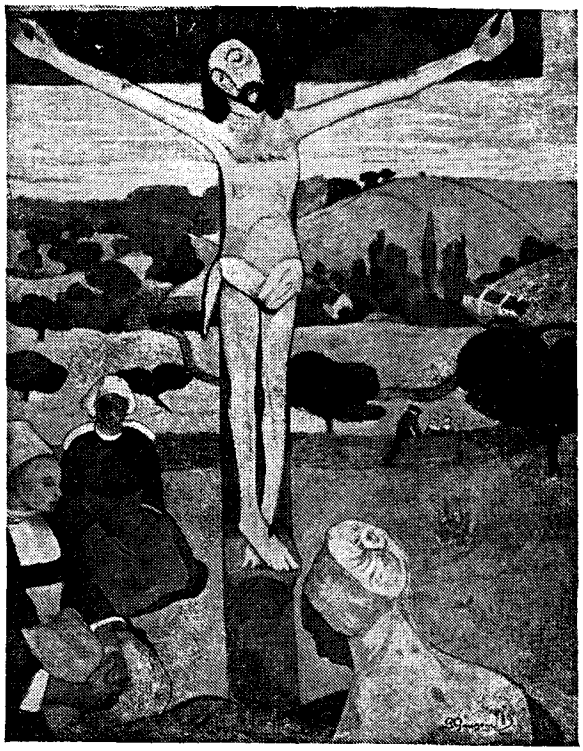
7. The person who really founded Christianity (around 55–60 A.D.) as a separate religion from Judaism was Paul. The Gospels, as we have them, are Paulinist documents (dating from 70–120 A.D.). Paul (who never knew Jesus) depoliticised him by turning him into a Saviour-God on the model of the mystery-deities, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Mithras, etc. Jesus himself would have disapproved strongly of Paul's doctrines, as did the so-called Jewish-Christians (Nazarenes) who (under the leadership of Jesus's brother James) were Jesus's true followers.

Recognising Jesus

THE ABOVE SKETCH of the "Jewish" position is not intended as a hard-and-fast platform to which all Jewish writers on the New Testament would adhere in every detail. Indeed, there is hardly a point which is held unanimously by all Jewish writers, or held in exactly the same way, even when they agree. Yet the general trend, I submit, is there.

It amounts to an assertion that a distinction must be made between the real, historical Jesus, who was a Jew and whose every action and thought are intelligible within the Jewish context, and the fantasy-Jesus who was developed by the Christian Church, a compound of Hellenistic spiritual yearnings and contemporary religio-political exigencies. The mainspring of this approach to the New Testament is the sense of *recognition* felt by Jewish readers of the Synoptic Gospels (though not of the Fourth Gospel). The Jesus recorded here is so recognisably a Jewish—indeed a Pharisee—teacher. His parables are like those of the Midrash, his tricks of speech and tone of voice (expressions like "the camel going through the eye of a needle" or "take the beam from thine own eye") are so exactly in the spirit of the Talmud. Even sayings which are supposed or intended to show his opposition to the Pharisees in fact betray his kinship to them. For example, his saying "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" is a well-known Pharisee principle which appears in the same words in the Talmud.

But while Jesus is, in my view, recognisably a Pharisee, the Pharisees who are portrayed in the Gospels are quite unrecognisable. Who are these so-called Pharisees, who want to kill Jesus because he heals people on the Sabbath? Where, or when, did the Pharisees ever forbid healing on the Sabbath? The Talmud, on the contrary, argues: "If circumcision, which concerns one of the 248 members of the body, overrides the Sabbath, shall not a man's whole body override the Sabbath?"[3] Yet when Jesus argues in a similar way (*John*, 7: 23), the Pharisees are represented as wanting to kill him! Why is Jesus, who so graphically emerges as a Pharisee, represented as being opposed by the Pharisees and as opposing them? Why are the Gospels so authentic, and yet so inauthentic? This is the question with which the "Jewish" position begins.



Paul Gauguin, THE YELLOW CHRIST

LET ME GIVE A SOMEWHAT bizarre example. At one point in the Gospels, Jesus is asked why he speaks in parables, and he replies, in effect, that he does so in order to disguise his meaning—lest the Jews should understand his message, accept it and thus achieve salvation. The historic fact is that the parable was invented, as an art form, by the Pharisees; and they used it to bring their message to the people by vivid, homely illustrations. Jesus uses the parable in exactly the same way—yet he is represented as regarding parables as riddles, intended to *prevent* his hearers from

[3] *Babylonian Talmud*, Yoma 85b. For a discussion of Pharisee Sabbath law, see my *Revolution in Judaea*, pp. 81–2, 269–75.

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understanding him. On the one hand, authenticity —the true atmosphere of Pharisaism expressed in the parables; on the other hand, inauthenticity —an anti-Semitic Jesus, withholding the truth from a people (his own people!) predestined to damnation. There could be no better example of the legerdemain in the Gospels which leads to the conclusion that we have here *re-worked* documents, in which large chunks of authentic matter remain. But the general tenor has been slanted to a purpose alien to the original story.[4] And the readers of the Gospels who are best placed to notice this kind of contradiction are the Jewish readers, who are steeped in the tradition of the parable and would be struck immediately by the inauthenticity of the function assigned to it. The literary-critical conclusion in this instance would be that the documents have been re-edited in order to import into them an antagonism between Jesus and his own people which never really existed.

The "Political" Jesus

WHAT KIND OF JESUS, then, emerges from the "Jewish" account?

Not (as has often been wrongly alleged) a purely political figure. Certainly his aims were such as would *nowadays* be regarded as political, *i.e.* the restoration of independence to the Jewish people and the ejection of the ruthless and extortionate Romans from the land which they had invaded and occupied. But there could be no greater historical error than to transfer our modern secularism into the age and milieu of Jesus. The liberation of the people of God and of the Holy Land was not regarded primarily, or even at all, as a matter of mere politics. It was regarded as a religious and apocalyptic matter, to which the prophecies of Isaiah, Joel and Zechariah, the Exodus from Egypt, the concept of the Last Days, and the world-mission of the children of Abraham were more relevant than considerations of "power-politics" or of "national self-determination."

When Jesus claimed the Messiahship, he was, it is true, claiming the Jewish throne, previously occupied by a long line of Kings, beginning with Saul and David, every one of whom had been known by the title *Messiah*, which (like its Greek translation, *Christ*) means "anointed one" (because of the anointing ceremony at the coronation of every Jewish King). But the advent of the Messiah would be a religious occasion—not because the Messiah would be divine (a concept utterly repugnant to Jewish monotheism), but because the Messiah, like Moses and all the other "saviours", would rescue the Jews from helpless thraldom and enable them to resume their religious mission.

Our modern secularism owes its origin to Hellenistic dualism with its concept of "a kingdom not of this world" (a phrase found only in the most Hellenistic of the Gospels, that of John). In Judaism, both then and now, the Messiah had meaning only in the context of *this* world. He was the leader whose advent signalised the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth. A Kingdom which was "not of this world" would have meant to the Jews an abdication from history. It would have represented a base surrender of the Jewish ideal of a human world permeated by the knowledge of the Lord "as the waters cover the sea." Politics was the physical expression of religion; and without such physical expression, religion was lifeless.

IT IS THUS FAR TOO facile a refutation of the "Jewish" position to say that it reduces Jesus to a "mere" political figure. In the present climate of theological opinion (in the aftermath of Bonhoeffer's Old-Testament-inspired resistance to Hitler), it is at last possible to argue (though nobody seems to be tempted to do so) that the Jewish concept of the Messiah may well be morally and spiritually superior to that of St Paul and St John. It is no longer axiomatic that a "spiritual" concept (*i.e.* one that removes the action and sphere of the spirit to a world other than the one in which we live) is superior or more "advanced" than the concept of the transformation of the physical, material, human world into a world of peace and justice. It ought to be remembered now that Judaism's "materialism" was not primitive insensitiveness to the spiritual dimension, but a reaction against the highly "spiritual" form of religion which the Jews had known only too well in Egypt—the emphasis on the next world (which went together with oppression in this world), and the divine king through whom all men had to seek salvation (to their detriment as self-legislating moral beings).

The Bultmannian Position

ONE WAY OF COPING with the "Jewish" position is to accept it—and say it does not truly matter. The most thoroughgoing advocate of this view is Rudolf Bultmann, whose famous destructive analysis of the historicity of the Gospels goes further than that of any critic of the

[4] Probably the closest modern parallel, *mutatis mutandis*, would be a Soviet textbook in which the contribution of Trotsky to the Revolution has been edited out in an "Operation Rewrite"—yet indications remain by which an astute enquirer with some knowledge of the general bias of the re-editing could reconstruct some at least of the original story.

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"Jewish" school. Bultmann concludes that nothing whatever can be known about the historical Jesus, since all the material available in in the Gospels relates not to Jesus himself but to the teaching and liturgical requirements of the early Christian Church. By a method of literary anaylsis called "form-criticism" he shows, or claims to show, that the Gospel material falls into well-defined groups of literary types, each of which had a definite *function* in the life of the early Church, so that to attempt to reconstruct Jesus himself from these materials is like trying to reconstruct the life of Karl Marx from, say, the minutes and resolutions of the British Labour Party.[5]

The Bultmannian position, just because it is at the opposite pole to the "Jewish" position, has a great deal in common with it. Both positions make a strong dichotomy between the historical Jesus and the Church (or "*kerygma*") Jesus. Bultmann, indeed, is willing to concede that the historical Jesus may well have been the Jewish resistance leader postulated by the "Jewish" position. Both positions see the Church-Jesus as a mythical figure whose outlines have been determined by Hellenistic forms of spirituality, and not by Judaism. Bultmann adopts with enthusiasm the thesis of Richard Reitzenstein[6] that the chief influence on Christianity is to be found in the Mystery Cults and in Gnosticism. The Jewish resistance leader who may have been the historical Jesus is to Bultmann unimportant and uninteresting; he was merely someone who happened to trigger off something important and far-reaching. The real interest lies in the myth developed by the Christian Church, a myth which expresses in story form a profound message about the human condition; and the task of theology is not to engage in fruitless historical reconstructions, but to decode the myth. This is Bultmann's famous "demythologisation", which some have wrongly taken to denote a hard-headed, factual approach.[7]

It is noteworthy that Bultmann, after enjoying a great vogue for a period, now appears to be unfashionable. For the last twenty years the weight of effort on the part of Christian scholars has been in quite the opposite direction: to prove a strong affinity between Christianity and Judaism, and to deny the alleged influence of Hellenistic mysticism. Bultmann, who for a time seemed to proponents of the "Jewish" position to be a dangerous antagonist who was cutting the ground from beneath their feet, has now taken on the aspect of an ally who needs to be supported. It is a matter of some interest to enquire why the Bultmannian position has been abandoned, and why the backlash against the "Jewish" position now takes the form of historical argument of the kind that Bultmann declared to be spiritually irrelevant and theologically boring.

Reacting against Bultmann

WHILE THERE IS a great parade of scholarly historiographical objectivity among New Testament scholars, their main motivations are still theological. The Bultmannian position cuts Christianity loose from its Jewish background. It is, if in a modern style, a curious revival of the early heresy of Marcion, who declared the Old Testament to be the work of the Devil. The Bultmannite, like the Marcionite, declares Christianity to be a new creation, with no necessary affiliations with Judaism. If this affirmation has to be made at the cost of denying the historicity of the Christian Jesus, the Bultmannite is quite prepared to pay this price.

But the mainstream Christian doctrine has always been that Christianity is the fulfilment of Judaism; that it *is* the true Judaism (the Church being the "true Israel") from which the Jews themselves turned aside. Continuity must be

[5] The pioneering works of *Formgeschichte* (in English, usually called "form-criticism") were *Die Formgeschichte der Evangeliums*, by Martin Dibelius, (1919), and *Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, by Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1919).

[6] Richard Reitzenstein (*Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 1910) pointed out the manifold similarities between Christian rites and doctrines and those of the Phrygian and Egyptian mystery-cults; especially, the rites and doctrines associated with a "saviour" who dies and is resurrected. For further evidence that Pauline Christology is derived from the mystery-cults, see Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, (1890); Otto Pfleiderer, *Das Urchristentum* (1887); Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (1913, 1921); Hans Lietzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche* (1932–8); Wilhelm Bauer, *Rechtglaübigkeit und Ketzerei in altesten Christentum* (1934).

[7] The real originator of this approach was Martin Kähler in his *Der sogennante historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christ* (1896) (*The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ*, English transl. 1964). Rudolf Bultmann's most thoroughgoing historical scepticism is to be found in his *Geschichte der Synoptischer Tradition* (1921) (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Eng. transl. 1958). In his later works, *Jesus and the Word* (1934), and *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (1951–5), he continued to pay lip-service to historical scepticism, but, in effect, returned to a rather conventional view of Jesus's life-story. For this he was strongly criticised by Karl Jaspers, who advocated, on Bultmannian principles, a complete abandonment of the historical Jesus (see Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity*, 1958). A word of warning: when reading Bultmannian literature, remember that words like "authentic", "historic" (as opposed to "historical") are used in a special sense which is almost the opposite of their normal meaning.

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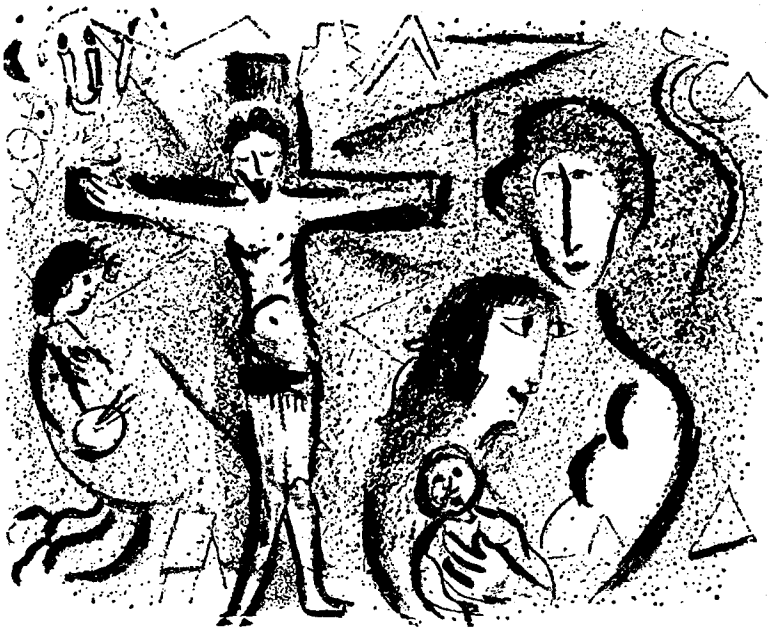
retained between Judaism and Christianity; Christian doctrines must be shown to have Jewish roots. Otherwise, the whole grand scheme of the Christian Church—which was to take over the eschatological role of the Jews as the Chosen People of God, to appropriate that historical mission which the ancient world found so awesome and so irritating—would have to be abandoned.

This, Christian theology always appears to be swinging between two poles: the affirmation of the uniqueness of Christianity and its superiority to Judaism, and, on the other hand, the affirmation of the oneness of Judaism and Christianity. Bultmann in asserting the former, the uniqueness and superiority of Christianity, had made the historical enquiry seem trivial and peripheral; but soon Christian thinkers became dissatisfied about allowing Jesus to slip back into his Jewish historical background. It became necessary to rescue him from those who were succeeding in making him entirely Jewish. Just when it had seemed to all concerned that the "Life of Jesus" was an outmoded form of literature, a whole new industry of re-fashioning the historical Jesus began.



Marc Chagall, CHRIST WITH FAMILY

THE DISCOVERIES of the Dead Sea Scrolls gave great impetus to this activity, but it would be wrong to give them the main responsibility for the present pendulum-swing which actually started before the Dead Sea Scrolls became a factor in the discussion. (W. D. Davies's book of 1948, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, for example, was written entirely without reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls.) The Scrolls, however, gave a great fillip to the movement, since they were held to prove that Judaism itself contained mystical and dualistic ideas previously regarded as especially Hellenistic. Even the lateness of the Fourth Gospel, established so painstakingly (and reluctantly) by a century of scholarship, was now gleefully questioned.[8] The dream of Christian theologians—to prove the authenticity of this "eye-witness" Gospel, the only one in which Jesus explicitly claims divine status—seemed realisable once more, and all the arguments which had accumulated to prove it the latest and the least authentic of the Gospels were forgotten or discounted.

The effect of this renewed interest in the historical Jesus, in his life and times, has been a renewal of detailed criticism of the "Jewish position" which in the Bultmann period had been allowed to go by default as being of no great theological significance even if true. Every aspect of the "Jewish position" has been busily attacked, and it would not be going too far to say that this has been the main preoccupation of recent New Testament scholarship. It is ironic that this has taken place at a time when there is a tacit agreement between Christian and Jewish scholars that the era of backbiting and partisan scholarship should be over, and that all could honourably cooperate to discover objective truths. The whole intellectual situation is not without its grotesque aspects.

ONE IMPORTANT COMPENDIUM of the Christian "backlash" is David Catchpole's *The Trial of Jesus* (1971). This is specifically a study of the "Jewish position" which it attempts to refute definitively, so far as it relates to the Trial aspects of the story, and it gives a very useful account of

[8] W. F. Albright, *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology* (1956), pp. 153–71; J. A. T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of St. John's Gospel", *New Testament Studies*, VI (1960), p. 124; A. J. B. Higgins, *The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel* (1960).

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the work done on the "Jewish position" both by Jews and non-Jews during the last 200 years.

> During this period of 200 years [Catchpole writes], roughly coincident with critical studies, Christians have been engaged in the introspective process of retreat from the positions of their forebears. Viewed from the Jewish side this is indeed a defensive movement of retreat. It is a movement which gathers pace, and Jews are able to profit from its momentum.

This is a moment of rare candour, for in the rest of his book, Catchpole preserves a prim air of disinterested research, and indeed frequently reproves Jewish authors for having an axe to grind in their own New Testament enquiries. Only Jews, he implies, could possibly have any *motive* in arriving at their characteristic opinions. Christians are interested only in arriving at the sober truth of the matter, and would not presumably find one type of conclusion more intrinsically gratifying than another. In the interests of sheer objectivity, Catchpole aims to halt the progress of the "Jewish position" and to end the Christian "retreat." In effect, he reasserts the traditional Christian standpoints: that Jesus was killed for religious, not political reasons; that he was at odds with the Pharisees, and was heretical and blasphemous in their eyes; that he was given a regular trial by the Sanhedrin, who handed him over to Pilate on a false charge of political sedition, though their real grounds for complaint were religious. Catchpole's conclusion echoes that of Lindeskog: "the 'political Jesus' theory is a failure."

Catchpole gives particularly close attention to the views of Paul Winter and S. G. F. Brandon. Brandon was a disconcerting figure, because he was a Christian of impeccable academic standing (he was Professor of Comparative Religion at Manchester University), who not only espoused the "Jewish position", but revived with formidable learning the thesis that the Nazarenes (or Jewish Christians) were the authentic followers of the historical Jesus, as opposed to the Gentile-Christians who followed a version of Jesus invented by Paul. It had been thought that this view (first argued by F. C. Baur and his followers of the "Tübingen" school) had been safely buried. The catchphrase of "Hegelian theory" had been used to discredit Baur, but Brandon and H. J. Schoeps were able to show that Baur's Hegelian trappings were quite irrelevant to the merits of his case; and also that certain technical deficiencies of Baur's textual method could easily be made good.[9]

Paul Winter, too, though a Jew and not an academic, had to be accepted as a highly competent contributor to New Testament studies, both because of his indefatigable scholarship and also because of a meticulous observance of academic protocol unusual in amateur scholars. He was taken more seriously by Christian scholars than any Jewish New Testament scholar since Joseph Klausner (whose work, in my view, was given somewhat undeserved prominence). Winter's special contribution was his demonstration of the Pharisaic quality of Jesus's teaching, with the conclusion that Jesus's alleged quarrels with the Pharisees were unhistorical and were in point of fact later tendentious additions to (or modifications of the story). While he argues that Jesus was killed for solely political reasons, Winter considers that Jesus may have been misunderstood by both his supporters and his enemies, and did not in fact intend to play a political role.

Catchpole's criticism of Brandon and Winter is a mixture of naivety and highly technical analysis. He is hampered by his misunderstandings of Pharisaism, which are very typical of Christian theologians who fail to equip themselves with a working knowledge of the Talmudic world. He does not understand that "ritual defilement" was not regarded as a sin (but as a necessary accident of living, like getting one's hands dirty). He does not understand that Jesus's proclamation of the *Endzeit* (Last Days) would not have been regarded by the Pharisees as a sin, but as a proposition that would be proved or disproved by events and would not be a sin even if proved wrong.

CATCHPOLE'S TECHNICAL criticisms of Winter and Brandon cannot be discussed here in full. They turn largely on the identification of passages of the Gospels which should be regarded as more "primitive" than others. On this basic question, opinions change among scholars with bewildering rapidity. Catchpole is sertain that the source known as *Q* is early and reliable (*Q* being a source conjectured from the coincidence of many passages in Matthew and Luke). But a recent scholarly book has thrown doubt on the very existence of the source *Q*, arguing that the coincidence in question arises merely from Luke's use of Matthew. The rapidity of see-saw change in textual criticism is, I fear, exceeded only by the confidence of scholars that the very latest fashion is the final scientific truth. A dispassionate survey of the shifts in textual fashion over the last fifty years would, I feel certain, lead to the conclusion that the decisive factor is the over-all theological (or anti-theological) stance of the writer. If this

[9] F. C. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte* (1853); H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (1949), and *Urgemeinde, Judenchristentum, Gnosis* (1956); S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (1951), and *Jesus and the Zealots* (1967).

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were more frankly acknowledged, more progress might be made in New Testament studies. One frequently has the feeling that the real issues in the mind and heart (not to mention soul) of the writer are not being disclosed at all.

The "Backlash"

THE REAL ISSUE in recent study is whether traditional Christian theological views of the life of Jesus—that he created a new religious outlook; that he thereby incurred the enmity of the Jewish religious establishment, the Pharisees; that his death was a voluntary sacrifice, not the failure of his hopes—can be maintained in face of the "Jewish" interpretation of Jesus's life: that his religious views were those of contemporary Pharisaism; that he clashed with the quisling political, not the religious, establishment; that his death on the cross was that of a martyr in the fight against Rome; and that the Gospels were rewritten, with much clumsiness and with many tell-tale inconsistencies, to accord with the Pauline version of Jesus's death as a mystery-god. It is the attempt to combat the "Jewish position" which has dictated the lines of recent research, which may be roughly outlined as follows:

1. To argue that Jesus *did* clash with the Pharisees[10] (here may be included various efforts to redefine historic Pharisaism so that Jesus may be shown to have clashed with at "least one, if untypical, variety of Pharisaism"[11]).

2. To argue that Pauline Christianity has Jewish, not Hellenistic, roots (so that the doctrines of Salvation, Resurrection, Original Sin, and even the Virgin Birth can be traced back to Jesus himself rather than to Hellenistic sources[12]).

3. To argue that the Jewish-Christians, or Nazarenes, were a "re-Judaising" movement which arose as a *later* reaction against Paulinism—not the proto-Christian movement argued by the "Jewish position"[13].

4. To render plausible the alleged responsibility of the Jewish religious authorities for the crucifixion by arguing that crucifixion was, after all, a "traditionally Jewish" form of punishment.

5. To render plausible the alleged religious hostility of the Jews against Jesus by giving new "historical" weight to certain anti-Jesus passages in the Talmud and in medieval popular Jewish literature (especially *Toledoth Yeshu*) previously regarded as unimportant and very late counters to Christian missionary activity[14].

6. To argue that Jesus did claim divine status, if not by claiming the title "Messiah" (now, on the whole, accepted as non-divine), then by claiming to be "Son of God" or "Son of Man." It is often denied now that Jesus ever claimed to be the "Messiah" at all.

THESE MULTIFARIOUS LINES of enquiry are naturally pursued quite without any ulterior purpose as pure disinterested research. Yet it is curious how they all tend in the direction of re-asserting the charge of deicide against the Jews. Catchpole felt it necessary to disclaim any "anti-Semitic" intention. At least he was prepared to admit that such an interpretation was conceivable, and he was one of the very few members of the school who have admitted openly that the target is in fact the "Jewish position."

Such frankness is to be commended. Anti-Semitism is certainly not part of the intention of the "backlash" movement as a whole, its real aim being the rehabilitation of the Gospels as historically reliable. Yet one can't help suspecting that there are some very equivocal, not to say sinister, figures in the background of the movement. For example, Dr Ethelbert Stauffer, who is constantly quoted by "backlash" writers, happened to be an active pro-Nazi from 1930 to 1945.[15] Stauffer more than anyone else was responsible for the theory (now accepted as fact by many scholars) that crucifixion was a recognised punishment in Jewish law. Refutations by the Jewish writers Paul Winter, Haim Cohn, and Joseph Baumgarten have gone unheeded—being so obviously tendentious—while Stauffer's own sentimental background is ignored or considered to be irrelevant. Rather more respected by the "backlash" movement than Stauffer is another German theologian, Dr Josef Blinzler, whose scholarly output has been mainly directed towards trying to establish Jewish guilt for the death of Jesus. I cannot help

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[10] E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (1964), p. 39. E. Lohse, *Die Geschichte des Leidens und sterbens Jesus Christi* (1964). G. Lindeskog, *Der Prozess Jesu* (1963), 325–336.

[11] *E.g.* John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (1973).

[12] W. F. Albright, W. D. Davies, R. le Déaut, M. de Jonge, J. Jeremias.

[13] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*.

[14] E. Bammel, W. Horbury.

[15] His professorship at Bonn University was a Nazi appointment. He wrote pro-Nazi books which have been unobtainable since the end of the Second World War, e.g. *Unser Glaube und unsere Geschichte: Zur Begegnung zwischen Kreuz und Hakenkreuz*, 1933. For a full account of his pre-war and wartime activities, see Ernst Bizer, "*Zur Geschichte der Evangelische Theologie Facultät von 1919 bis 1945*" in *Bonner Gelehrte* (Bonn, 1968). Now in his seventies, Stauffer is a highly respectable and influential theologian, his books distributed in translation by pious bodies such as the S.C.M., his view quoted with the awe due to a Professor of Erlangen University.

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feeling rather uneasy about their stance of disinterested research and sometimes suspect that scholars may conceivably be subject to manipulation here.

To be sure, there are not wanting among Jews themselves a number of scholars who appear to establish their utter lack of *ressentiment* and their spotless objectivity by adopting "anti-Jewish" positions, sometimes in a form which caricatures the original. For example, Yigael Yadin has, in my view, contributed some singularly fatuous arguments in favour of the "Jewish crucifixion" theory.

A far more interesting case is Geza Vermes, author of *Jesus the Jew* (1973) and Reader in Jewish Studies in the University of Oxford. In many ways, he is a contributor to the "Jewish position", *e.g.* his painstaking demonstration that the terms "Lord", "Son of Man" and "Son of God" carried no connotation of divinity in the original Jewish context. On the other hand, he tries to justify the Gospel's account of Pharisee hostility to Jesus by arguing that Jesus, though himself a Pharisee, belonged to a small "dissident" sub-group of the Pharisees called the Hasidim. The trouble is that this sub-group was not dissident at all, and Vermes is erratic in trying to prove that it was; *e.g.* he misunderstands the role of ritual purity in Pharisaism and thus attributes to the Hasidim a heterodoxy in this area which they did not possess. (This is not to say that the consideration of the Hasidim is without relevance to the study of Jesus.) The explanation of Vermes's apparently unclassifiable position between the formal camps as I have outlined them is that he appears to be a "Jewish Christian" (like Hugh Schonfield, the author of *The Passover Plot*). As a Jewish Christian, Vermes reveres Jesus, not indeed as a divine figure, but as the greatest and most spiritual of the Jewish prophets. He writes: "No objective and enlightened student of the Gospels can help but be struck by the incomparable superiority of Jesus" to the Rabbis and to other Hasidim; and he refers, in an earlier book, to ". . . the genius of Christ who laid bare the inner core of spiritual truth." Jewish writers are prepared to regard Jesus as a heroic martyr in the cause of Judaism, and as a teacher of considerable stature within the Pharisee movement (which accommodated without strain many varieties of opinion and of style in its teachers). A Jewish Christian, however, will go much further both in exalting Jesus and in denigrating the Pharisees.

A LAST WORD HERE on the "Jewish crucifixion" theory.

Professor Stauffer's arguments in *Jerusalem und Rom im Zeitalter Jesus Christi* (1957) were based on phrases in the *Assumption of Moses*, the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Nahum Pesher*), and the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 6:4 and *Shabbath* 6:10). Stauffer made the error of confusing the ritual hanging-up of the *dead* body of an executed criminal with crucifixion. But as Paul Winter wrote in his classic work, *The Trial of Jesus*:

> whereas the Romans crucified Jewish prisoners of war by their thousands . . . we know not a single instance in which the Jewish guerrillas, pitiless as they were . . . resorted to the method of crucifixion.

Yet Ernst Bammel (formerly of Bonn and Erlangen Universities, now Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge University) writes in *The Trial of Jesus* (1970): "It is clear from the material collected most recently by E. Stauffer that in fact the originally non-Jewish punishment of crucifixion had been used in Palestine since the second century BC—even by Jewish courts." Bammel adds a few thin arguments of his own: namely, that the occurrence of references in Jewish literature to crucifixion without appended expressions of horror *proves* that the Jews practised crucifixion; and, again that a discussion by rabbis in the Talmud *against* crucifixion proves that crucifixion had been practised until this discussion took place! On this basis, and with no other evidence, Bammel contends that the Jews practised crucifixion until the 2nd century A.D. and only gave it up in order to be different from the Romans. It is astonishing that arguments of this calibre can gain such acceptance that the "Jewish crucifixion" theory can be referred to in the *Times Literary Supplement* as a "fact."

Yigael Yadin's additions to the "Jewish crucifixion" theory are derived from the Dead Sea Scrolls: certain phrases of the Temple Scroll he interprets as referring to crucifixion. J. Heinemann and Joseph M. Baumgarten have shown, however, that these phrases refer to strangulation by hanging, and not to crucifixion.[16]

[16] Y. Yadin, "Pesher Nahum Reconsidered", *Israel Exploration Journal*, 21 (1971), pp. 1–12; J. Heinemann, "The Targum of Ex. XXII, 4 and the Ancient Halakha" (Hebrew), in *Tarbiz* 38 (1969), pp. 294–96; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Does TLH in the Temple Scroll refer to Crucifixion?"; *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 91 (1973), pp. 472 ff.

Anti-Semitic Gospel

THE ANTI-JEWISH ASPECT of the Gospels (which, of course, has also to be seen in the context of Hellenistic anti-Semitic literature

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generally) must be faced squarely. Objectivity means, at the very least, taking cognisance of certain hard facts. The "Jewish position", to this extent, can claim to be more objective than other positions in the field precisely because it recognises the existence of this aspect of the Gospels, seeks to account for it, and attempts to show how the contradiction of a Jewish Jesus with an anti-Semitic message can be explained in terms of the history of the Pauline-Christian Church and the Jewish national defeat by the Roman Empire. To ignore the anti-Semitism of the Gospels may be ecumenically useful and conducive to good relations in academic life between Jews and Christians; what it is *not*, is objective.

Actually, ecumenism has probably been *less* effective as a result of the attempt to deny the anti-Semitism of the Gospels. In the Vatican II resolutions of our own day, Christian anti-Semitism was admitted and deplored, but it was all attributed to the *misunderstanding* of the Gospels. Real ecumenism must surely start with the recognition that Christian anti-Semitism is based on an only too correct understanding of certain passages in the Gospels (*e.g.* the Barabbas episode with its lynch-cry for crucifying; *Matthew* 23; *John* 8, 44) and of their general implications for Jewish "generations of vipers."[17]

A recent highly-publicised case in France throws some light on public unawareness of the real issues. Jacques Isorni, a well-known French advocate, sued Abbé Georges de Nantes for libelling him in an article which attacked his book *Le Vrai Procès de Jesus*. The contest was presented in the world press as one between a "liberal" and a "reactionary" view of the Jewish responsibility for Jesus's death. Isorni's defence of the Jews (for which de Nantes had attacked him as a falsifier of the Gospels) was that they had brought about Jesus's death in genuine, and excusable, error because (*a*) they did not realise that Jesus was God; (*b*) Jesus had in fact seriously broken Jewish law by claiming to be the Messiah. De Nantes' case, on the other hand, was that the Gospels represent the Jews as deliberately bringing about Jesus's death *fully knowing him to be God*.

Purely as interpretations of the Gospels' intentions, there is something to be said for both sides of this controversy. Certain passages (giving a Satanic role to the Jews) certainly support the Abbé's contention; others support Isorni's. Others, again, could be cited in favour of a third interpretation, that the Jews suffered from a wilful blindness to Jesus's divinity; or even a fourth interpretation, that the wicked past history of the Jews influenced Jesus to withhold purposely the secret of his divinity from them in order to bring about their deserved damnation. All these interpretations are tenable either singly or simultaneously (since the Gospels may be justly held to veer from one to the other). They all assume (*a*) that Jesus was in fact God; (*b*) that the Jews as a people, or through leaders representative of their religion and *Weltanschauung* were responsible for his death; (*c*) that it was a crime in Jewish religious law to claim to be the Messiah.

The first assumption would not command universal assent and can hardly be called "objective." The other two assumptions are contradicted by the "Jewish position", which of course is an interpretation not of what the Gospels say but of the historical truth which lies behind the Gospels. The so-called "liberal" interpretation of Maître Isorni is tantamount to a whitewashing of the Gospels in that it concentrates on the less grievous aspects of them. The so-called "reactionary" interpretation is a valid rendering of certain undeniable passages in the Gospels. Neither interpretation does anything at all to criticise the Gospels or the basic mythological scenario in which the Jews play the part either of Satanic villains (de Nantes) or deluded bunglers (Isorni). The whole controversy takes place in an

[17] The pioneers of Christian awareness of the anti-Semitism of the Gospels are Friedrich Heer, *God's First Love* (1964) and Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide* (1974).

MATTHEW

MARK

LUKE

JOHN

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area light-years away from the important issues raised by advocates of the "Jewish position."[18]

The Jewish Jesus

IS, THEN, THE "POLITICAL JESUS" dead? The "political Jesus" is a misnomer, because nobody, to my knowledge, has ever argued that Jesus was a purely political figure in the modern sense. Such a figure would have been an anachronism in the Palestine of Jesus's era. The question should rather be, "Is the Jewish Jesus dead?", *i.e.* the Jesus who used terms like "Messiah" in a sense recognisable to his contemporaries, who died on the cross for the same reasons as so many other idealistic Jews, whose vision of human peace and freedom in the world was a Jewish vision derived from the Jewish prophets. The "backlash" scholars are, of course, entitled to a different view and will no doubt continue to proffer arguments for a Jesus hated, rejected, and misunderstood by his fellow-Jews. But they should not claim a monopoly in either objectivity or plausibility for their opinions. The Jewish Jesus is still very much alive.

[18] I have based the above account not only on newspaper reports in the European press but also on a transcript of the "*jugement*" of the Tribunal of Troyes, kindly sent to me by M. Isorni, who, in a courteous letter (replying to my objections to his views), explained that the proofs for his arguments were entirely "*dans le cadre des Evangiles.*"

The Dinosaur

At night, shadowing the streets
It stood in a large mood.

Armed with hindsight it began to move
Through an ordered world.

Past the best sleeping brains,
Past electric light and moon

It lurched to find food.

Singing to the morning, to the past,
Sucking up the crumbs the night threw,
Spitting out the rusty cans
It began to grow big and heavy.

And it lurched on through ages
To become brooding; an extinction

Of mood; a pulsating pea-brain
And star.

Gathering dust for its death,
And unmovable in love for the last time

It littered doves that rose silently to power.

T. F. Griffin

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LETTERS

Feltrinelli's Death

WE READ with interest Melvin J. Lasky's article in the June 1975 number of ENCOUNTER.

We fully recognise that we have no competence to comment on the facts specifically pertinent to the Baader-Meinhof Group, nor would we wish to. However, the reference to the death of the publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli clearly calls for our particular attention. Three years after this tragic event, and despite attempts to manipulate the truth for various interests, the verdict on the case is still open. That is to say, the official and legal investigators in Italy do not pretend to know who made or planted the bomb, the explosion of which caused such a hideous death. Therefore, either Mr Lasky is in possession of information denied to those working on the case for the past three years—a hypothesis which, with all due respect to his journalistic abilities, we find unconvincing—or his version of the facts is tendentious, tasteless and irresponsible. If such may be said for so small a paragraph in a fifteen-page article, is faith warranted in the rest?

We do not profess to know what is unknown, but we feel that a minimum of respect for the *known* truth is a social obligation for those in positions of power through the influence of the printed word; not to mention of course a certain epistemological seriousness for those interested in the truth *per se*. This first and foremost. Recognition of an important contribution made to the cultural heritage of a country we may look for later, and probably not in ENCOUNTER.

GG FELTRINELLI EDITORE

Milan

Ed. Note—I suspect that no factual account of the death of Feltrinelli in Milan some three years ago would have sufficient "epistemological seriousness" to meet the dialectical requirements of his old comrades-in-arms at the Feltrinelli publishing house. They prefer to believe that "the case is still open", though it has been officially closed. They have held mystically fast to a version of events—that Feltrinelli, as a rich and powerful patron of the revolutionary Marxist underground, was an assassination target of the Fascist right and that his mangled corpse was planted alongside a bomb-damaged pylon to give the impression that he was a victim of his own anarcho-terrorist folly—for which there has been little, if any, evidence at all. A number of European newspapers and magazines, among them the *Sunday Times* of London, offered this melodramatic version as a suspicious political mystery; but since those first sensationalised accounts of the Feltrinelli tragedy, nothing more has been heard of it. My brief reference was, therefore, based on the available factual information, and I see no reason why it should be considered "tendentious." To be hoist by one's own petard is not exactly an unknown phenomenon (and in recent years dozens of adventurous militant spirits have accidentally blown themselves up with their own home-made bombs in Ulster and elsewhere); and although in each case the stroke of misfortune regrettably produces a hideous death, no historian can accept that it is either "tasteless" or "irresponsible" to record what actually happened.

I have recently checked again with the authorities in Milan, and according to the chief magistrate's office there had been no evidence that Feltrinelli's death was anything but an accident during an ill-starred attempt to blow up the Segrate electricity network. Therefore, as the *sostituto procuratore della Repubblica*, Dr Guido Viola, announced on 24 March 1975, the three-year-old investigation was officially closed; and his final reconstruction of the disastrous affair, except for some additional corroborating evidence which the police found in a hideout of the *Brigate Rosse*, differed in no way from the account I presented in my article.

M.J.L.

Havel's "Open Letter"

WHILE READING Vaclav Havel's *An Open Letter* [ENCOUNTER, September 1975], I at times quite forgot that the writer was a Czech and he was exposing the most sinister veiled threat to the flowering of human life in Czechoslovakia. I felt I was reading what I myself could have written. Which, of course, was an illusion, though I continue to wish I were the one to have written it. It is a big comfort, however, to realise that Havel has written for all of us here in India, and it is a joy to know that such a soul as Havel exists.

A. JHA

Model Town,
Delhi, India

Bury No Hearts (or Minds) at Wounded Knee

GEORGE FEAVER relates in his "An Indian Melodrama" [ENCOUNTER, May] some situations as if it were clear what had really happened there. In fact, one is often confronted with two versions of the same event; and although Mr Feaver is free to back the official version, it should at least be mentioned that a second version does exist. I agree easily that AIM has not monopolised the truth—but then, neither have the BIA nor tribal president Wilson.

Some illustrations. Estimates of the destruction of the BIA (Trail of Broken Treaties) vary from $750,000 to $2.5 million; the supposed split between AIM and Bissonette may actually never have taken place (at least that's what the involved persons say) and may have been just a "*divide et impera*" device; AIM says that the village of Wounded Knee has been destroyed mainly by Mr Wilson and his goons; and so on.

AIM leaders' criminal records—why give so much space to them? Is it only to discredit them, as this was done by a great part of the American press? AIM had never made a secret of it. Moreover, it should be con-

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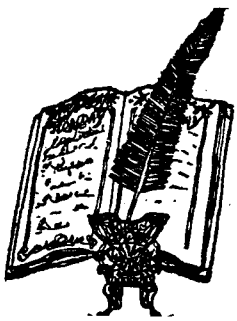
sidered that the liberal middle-class bourgeois—well-to-do and sentimental—will never appeal in the same way to lower classes as a person belonging to them—a person who can convince by personal experiences gained at society's bottom.

AIM leaders have one more fault—if one is to believe George Feaver: they're (only?) urban Indians. But there is no reason to be surprised by it. Today about 40% of the total Indian population is living in urban areas—mostly due to BIA's relocation programmes (and often in slums, by the way). Our attitude towards Indians is not very consistent. On the one hand we (white people) think they had better assimilate, integrate, move to the cities, abandon their way of life—and on the other hand, we deny them the right to speak inasmuch as they are not "real" Indians to us. Real Indians have to conform to the image we have of them, that is, they must at least live on a reservation, if they can't live any more by hunting the buffalo on the plains (which we would surely prefer).

As for the moderate Mr Wilson, he may be moderate in his objectives as far as an improvement of the reservation situation is concerned—but that's about all. He is not even moderate in his language. And what kind of a "moderate" is he to whom the John Birch Society's organ *American Opinion* dedicates an issue (May 1973)? A moderate who declares martial law on the reservation? In the 1960s he had been involved in a case of conflict of interest; some years later, already as tribal president, he and tribal secretary Mousseaux were accused of having converted tribal funds to the use of another individual.

Words, Words, Words (IV)



I SOMETIMES HAVE A *fear that we are in for a nasty time: a period of hardness, of heartlessness, of realism. Words such as "compassion", "understanding", "relating" and "relevant" have fallen into such disrepute, alas with good reason, that we are coming to feel disgust with the things which these words denote. I expect many of us have been told that we should feel compassion for someone who has just done us a bad turn (and perhaps profited from it), on the grounds that whoever it is has an inferiority complex or a superiority complex or is "disadvantaged" by being below average height or above average height. To be informed that we ought to feel compassion can turn the heart to stone.*

The words I mentioned are of course associated with the radical Left, but I don't mean that the nasty time will necessarily take the form of a radical Right backlash. It could come equally well from the radical Left: once the tough boys get in, whatever their politics, they quickly drop the smarmy cult terms which they have used to oil their way and substitute some less smarmy and much nastier slogans.

A RECENT ISSUE of ENCOUNTER **included a witty send-up, by Michael Wharton, of an imaginary trendy, "an all-purpose, portable, folding social psychologist (or psycho-sociologist)" called Dr Heinz Kiosk, "committed yet compassionate, thought-provoking yet deeply controversial", especially on television. Dr Kiosk is richly endowed—I quote—in "the qualities of compassion, participation and open-ended dialogue which are the 'edge tools' of meaningful, relevant criticism of our society." Is Dr Kiosk too easy a target? I think not: many will flock to his defence simply because the alternative, as they see it, is fascism. The really easy target is the moderate man, poor devil—the Saint Sebastian of our day, stuck full of arrows front and back.**

Recently I came across a passage in which someone remarked of someone else that one would not insult him by ascribing compassion to him. Was this one fascist beast saluting another fascist beast? No, not at all. It was one of our most highly-reputed critics praising one of our most highly-esteemed poets. And we know what he means: it *is*, in fact, praise. It serves to dissociate the poet in question from the commercialised bleeding heart and the cant which accompanies it—from the Dr Kiosk of Michael Wharton's satire.

BUT HOW SAD IT IS *that some of us feel obliged to say things like this! And how dreadful if the tendentious and all too easy mouthing of words like "compassion" on the part of people for whom they are* merely *words, or "edge tools" for the carving out of celebrity and a bank balance—how dreadful if this should persuade us to throw over what those words none the less do—or can—signify. I don't want to weary you further with the word "compassion", so let us turn to the word "relevant", a word which was practically new when I was a student. The use of the concept of "relevance" to oppose or discredit the reading of Jane Austen is rather worse than simple philistinism. Philistinism is probably a fact of nature, and I dare say we all exhibit it at one time or another, whereas the "relevance" syndrome is acute rather than chronic. Yet, in what is the true sense of the word, Jane Austen* is *"relevant": if her books were "irrelevant" to us and our concerns we simply wouldn't read them, and there would be no need for revolutionary sheep to forbid us to read them.*

I HAVE SO DISMAYED MYSELF **that I must end with a saying—from which can be drawn mysterious succour, inexplicable, but, I trust, relevant. Johnson's superb remark in the preface to his *Dictionary of the English Language*: "I am not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven."**

D. J. Enright

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Charges against Wilson were dismissed: Mousseaux was convicted. Knowing this—and Mr Feaver surely does, but he chooses to quote only remarks critical of AIM—AIM's claim that corruption reigns on Pine Ridge is not surprising.

George Feaver is a bit quick in following Judge Warren Urbom in dismissing the concept of sovereignty. You don't even have to go as far as the Sioux Nation Treaty Conference which (in its "Declaration of Continuing Independence" of June 1974) "recognises the sovereignty of all Native Nations." Even US courts speak of tribal sovereignty. One Federal court defined reservations as "quasi-sovereign entities possessing all the inherent rights of sovereignty except where restrictions have been placed thereon by the U.S. itself." The general doctrine appears to be that it is a "residual sovereignty", directed toward internal affairs, the external powers of sovereignty having been removed. Internal sovereignty means, mainly, the right to self-government. This is not just theoretical. It is because of tribal sovereignty that constitutional rights do not extend *automatically* to reservations, but had to be extended *expressis verbis* in the 1968 Indian Bill of Rights. It is because of this concept that Federal courts *refused to intervene* in a case involving religious freedom; that the Secretary of the Interior regularly denied any appeal concerning election frauds on reservations because he would not "interfere in intra-tribal affairs. . . ."

I am not in a position to judge whether Wounded Knee brought additional financial hardship to the Sioux of Pine Ridge. Anyway, financial hardship is nothing new to them. In 1973, 40% of all Indians (but only 13·7% of general population) lived below poverty level; in 1972 unemployment figures on reservations were about 42%, but in some places as high as 70 or 80%. In 1968 the average cash-income-per-capita was $900, which is below one-third of the 1968 national average. And so on.

What Wounded Knee did bring to the resident Indians was violence. Especially in its aftermath: 17 October 1973, Pedro Bissonette was shot; 10 November, Phillip Little Crow beaten to death; 15 November, Pat Hart shot; 20 November, Allison Little Fast Horse shot; in a shooting incident, then 9-year-old Mary Anne Little Bear lost one eye. And violence seems to be continuing. AIM supporters say that they are the victims, and that it is performed by tribal president Wilson's private police, the "goons."

These are some of the more important points I wanted to correct.

ELLEN HEINEMANN

Geneva,
Switzerland

ELLEN HEINEMANN cannot have read my Indian series in its entirety (*Encounter*, February, March, April, May, October 1975) as I have discussed most aspects of her supposed "corrections" in considerable detail.

(1) BIA *destruction*. I chose the $2m. estimate from among various news reports as it fell between the extremes. But even if one allowed the *lowest* figure of $750,000, that still adds up to a lot of mindless destruction. Or does Ms Heinemann wish to excuse any and all destruction of public property by Indians?

(2) *The supposed split" between* AIM *and Bissonette*. My concern was to describe events, not to plumb the motives or the self-serving *post hoc* rationalisations of "the involved persons." Ms Heinemann's naivety is equally apparent in her observation that "AIM says" the village of Wounded Knee was destroyed "mainly" by Wilson and his supporters.

(3) AIM *criminal records*. Three sentences in a series running to some 30,000 words is hardly devoting too much space to a fact which bears immediately on the discussion which follows. It was no part of my intention to leave AIM unscathed. And it is Ms Heinemann who is "sentimental" (and condescending too) in suggesting that a criminal record bestows a capacity to "convince by personal experiences gained at society's bottom". This is a variation on the chic theme of romanticising the *lumpenproletariat* which one would have thought is today utterly discredited.

(4) AIM's *urban leaders*. In my own text I note that roughly half the total Indian population live in urban centres, and that since 1930 American Indians have achieved the largest proportional growth in urbanisation of any minority in America, including Blacks. But Ms Heinemann misses my larger point about the urban backgrounds of AIM's leaders. At the base of the conflict between AIM and Wilson is the question whether it is the place of Indian outsiders to instruct the Pine Ridge Reservation dwellers on how best to conduct their own affairs. More than that, as my discussion of the farcical aspects of the Wounded Knee occupation should have made clear, AIM's urban leaders themselves contributed by their Wild West theatricalities to the persistence of the stereotyping which we all find deplorable. AIM's chief supporters at Pine Ridge have been the "pure bloods", *i.e.* traditionalists whose perspective is backward-looking and romantic. My narrative addressed itself to the paradoxes which inhere in the futile search after a dead past conducted by this bizarre coalition of alienated reservation and urban-dwelling Indians, one element of which is expressly reactionary, the other ostensibly revolutionary. Ms Heinemann's emphasis on "real Indians" strikes me as bordering on the politically autistic.

(5) "*Moderate*." Labels simplify, but it is clear from the contexts in which I use the term "moderate" that I am speaking of those Indians who have resisted AIM's radicalism. We need not follow the lead of *American Opinion*: everybody knows what the Birchers thought of such "moderates" as Dwight Eisenhower and Martin Luther King. And I cannot see how Ms Heinemann's citation of a conflict-of-interest case in which Wilson was acquitted adds strength to AIM's claim that "corruption reigns on Pine Ridge."

(6) *Sovereignty*. I refer Ms Heinemann to my discussion of the evolution of the reservation system (ENCOUNTER, March) where I comment on the matter of internal and external sovereignty. Judge Urbom's judgment merely upholds a long tradition of US Supreme Court rulings and is hardly overturned by the mere authority of the Sioux Nation Treaty Conference of June 1974. Ms Heinemann's appreciation of the historical reasons which lay behind the

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reluctance of the Courts and the Interior Department to "interfere in intra-tribal affairs", incidentally, suggests a good reason why charges of reservation "corruption" made by outsiders, Indian or otherwise, are best dealt with cautiously.

(7) *Financial hardship and violence.* Ms Heinemann's points here add nothing to my own discussion; she only draws different conclusions from the facts. I do not believe AIM's influence to have been, on balance, beneficial. She seems inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt. Meantime, there have been at least eight killings at Pine Ridge since the beginning of last year, along with uncounted numbers of assaults, beatings, and gunfire incidents. Recently two FBI agents were murdered on the reservation while trying to serve arrest warrants. The entire point of my Indian articles was to deplore the resort to a style of violent racial politics that has proved to be as fruitless in AIM's 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee and its fratricidal aftermath as the original 19th-century Indian Wars.

What is needed instead is an unswerving commitment to work steadily for concrete improvements through the admittedly imperfect machinery of America's democratic institutions. This kind of step-by-step melioristic progress is much to be preferred to ideological policy which is based on a starry-eyed indulgence in highly romantic reconstructions of America's past. On 4 June the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed *HR6219* extending the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for ten years beyond its scheduled expiry date this August, and included in its coverage American Indians.

I find this more welcome news than the announcement of yet another edition of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (this one "Adapted for Young Readers by Amy Ehrlich"). I don't believe, so far as the cause of human rights and social change is concerned, in burying hearts or minds anywhere.

GEORGE FEAVER

Vancouver

Gurdjieff, Sufism & Pseudo-Sufism

GURDJIEFF'S ALCHEMY aims at transmutation not confutation.

The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

I quite agree with Malcolm Stewart (whose letter I applaud) that P. D. Ouspensky was a first-rank pupil of Gurdjieff from 1915 to 1923. Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* is both an account of those extraordinary years and an unrivalled introduction to the ideas of Gurdjieff.

It remains only to answer the question put me by Elwell-Sutton. What is the current title of Gurdjieff's still unpublished third book? I am sorry if my earlier letter led him to infer some change in title. Not so. The current title of Gurdjieff's Third Series of writing, privately printed, is the same as it has always been namely *Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am"*. I am afraid your correspondent is confusing two quite different books. *Views from the Real World* published in 1973 is not the Third Series as implied in his article and letter. This is clear from its sub-title *Early Talks of Gurdjieff As Recollected by his Pupils.*

I regret I can allocate no more time to this correspondence.

JAMES MOORE

Royal Asiatic Society,
London

JAMES MOORE's logic is becoming too convoluted for me. He first attributes to me a statement I didn't make (*viz.* that Ouspensky was a pupil of Gurdjieff); he then rebuts that statement; and finally he repudiates his rebuttal. Where is he now? Presumably in some Beelzebubian heaven where I don't propose to join him.

L. P. ELWELL SUTTON

Edinburgh

Eysenck & Skinner

ONCE AGAIN COMES the old question about psychologists laying claim to scientific status.

In an article attempting a calm, reasoned assessment of B. F. Skinner (July 1975), your man Eysenck makes this unsupported statement about man's tendencies: "We do, however, behave as if either driven by the stick or attracted by the carrot. . . ." Do we really? Not only have plenty of other explanations been suggested (such as biologically inherited drives which may, or may not, make sense in civilisation) but we have only to look around at friends and colleagues to see that they repeat for whole lifetimes behaviour which gives them no rewards and regularly provides clearly apparent punishment.

Eysenck again, this time as final disproof of Skinner's theories, refers vaguely to an experiment in which two methods—stern Victorian discipline and "small positive reinforcements"—were both successful in persuading children to eat spinach. When the undescribed experiment was over, though, the reinforced subjects dropped the habit, while the meek little Victorians went on dutifully eating their spinach. Therefore, Eysenck tells us, "Reinforcement works very well while it lasts. But it does not usually establish long-continued habits which persist. . . ." He is asking the intelligent ENCOUNTER reader to accept that broad generalisation about human nature on the basis of one "simple" experiment whose details he withholds. Knowing children, I can't believe any such experiment could be simple. Think of the variables involved! And he tells us nothing of the age, number, or background of the children, the personalities of the researchers, the length of the experiment, or even—most important, perhaps—the *kind* of reinforcement offered. Suppose, for instance, the reward for eating a spoonful of spinach was a bar of candy. Could that be expected to develop a taste for spinach?

Of course, the experiment may have been a quite sensible one, properly carried out, justifying some sort of limited conclusion about teaching children to eat. I can hardly believe it, though, being old enough to have known many food-neurotic adults who once sat at Victorian tables agonisedly hiding a steadily increasing increment of fish, or brussels sprouts, or boiled egg, in one cheek throughout the meal. Maybe my examples are statistically insignificant, but it's

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surprising that one person could have met so many.

I hold no brief for Skinner's methods; very likely they *are* ineffectual in most areas. The point is that Eysenck gives us no proof of this. Like many other experts dealing with the mind, he lays claim to scientific authority and then insults our intelligence by statements about human nature as wildly sweeping and unsupported as any televison commercial, based only on the medicine man's mysterious magic formula, "Experiments have shown. . . ."

HOPE HALE DAVIS

Westport,
Connecticut

Last Secrets

I HAVE JUST READ Don Cook's review [ENCOUNTER, July 1975] of Nicholas Bethell's *The Last Secret* with much interest. Readers may be interested in the following item which I noted during a perusal of the minutes of a meeting of the War Cabinet held on 19 April 1943:

> The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the Poles were greatly upset about the statement put out by the Germans alleging the discovery at Smolensk of a grave containing the corpses of large numbers of Polish officers. The Secretary of State said that he had done all he could to persuade the Poles to treat this as a German propaganda move designed to sow discord between the Allies.
>
> The view was also expressed, and met with general approval, that the Poles would be wise not to allow this incident to divert them from the objective of securing Russian assent to the remainder of Polish troops and their families now in Russia in being sent to the Middle East.

The full reference of this document is CAB 65/34, WM 56(43), and it is of course in the Public Record Office.

E. P. MALONE

University of Auckland,
New Zealand

LORD BETHELL wonders how a number of well-informed British politicians could fail to see the perfidy of Soviet Russia. He states however that Churchill had no illusions about Stalin's wickedness ["After the Last Secret", ENCOUNTER, November 1975].

What are the facts? The following are extracts from Hansard taken from statements made by Churchill.

27th February 1945

"The impression I brought back from Crimea and from all my other contacts is that Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honourable friendship and equality with the Western democracies. I feel also that their word is their bond. I know of no Government which stands to its obligations, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian Soviet Government. I decline absolutely to embark here on a discussion about Russian good faith."

7th November 1945

"Here I wish to say how glad we all are to know and feel that Generalissimo Stalin is still strongly holding the helm and steering his tremendous ship. Personally, I cannot feel anything but most lively admiration for this truly great man, the father of his country, the ruler of its destinies in times of peace, and victorious defender of its life in time of war."

S. BRYKCZYNSKI

London

Texan English

THE ACCOUNT of the dictionary of Texan English which appears in your September issue omits one of Lyndon Johnson's most revealing phrases: "*mah feller merkins!*"

As any student of 18th-century writers knows a *merkin* was a pubic wig much affected by those who had lost hair in—as it were—the wars of Venus. Could it be that this is the earliest warning of the dire gap between appearance and reality which was to so alter the course of history during the administration of his successor?

BRIAN HEPWORTH

Department of English,
York University

Poet's Statement

DOUGLAS DUNN, in his sympathetic review [ENCOUNTER, September] of my *Collected Poems 1929–1974*, attempts to account for my motivation as a poet during the past fifty years. No reply is called for, but I would like to make a personal statement about just two matters in his account.

First, he infers from shrewdly selected quotations that I have written as I have out of a sense of neglect. I have never been conscious of neglect, since my poems have had the attention, and often the approval, of most, if not all, of the poets of my time whom I respect or admire, from Edwin Muir to Douglas Dunn, as well as many who read poems for what they are rather than as fitting or not fitting into some spurious critical orthodoxy.

Secondly, he says I have not understood "modernism" and defied the influence of Eliot and Pound, who "vaporised" the English lyrical tradition. I *have* understood modernism as initiated by Auden, to the extent of not wanting to write like that myself. Nor do I think a lyrical tradition going back to the Greek and Roman poets can be permanently destroyed by the influence of two American expatriates, many of whose earlier poems, however, I have admired. I have written love poems at all times, and I regret that two who have written none, Auden and Eliot, should have been institutionalised as the major English poets of my time. The lyric has gone underground at several periods in our history, but has always emerged. Herrick, for instance, didn't come to terms with the modernism of the Metaphysicals; but his lyrical achievement began to be recognised a century after his death. I don't identify myself with Herrick: I simply make a plea for a longer view in literary history.

JAMES REEVES

Flints, Rotten Row,
Lewes, Sussex

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Life & Letters Today

London

SHAVIAN: If those militant unions break the will of the government one more time, the grim prophecy in G. B. Shaw's "Heartbreak House" will not seem so far-fetched.

At the end of the play the prophetic Captain Shotover is asked what will happen to "this ship . . . we call England." He answers: "The captain is in his bunk, drinking bottled ditchwater; and the crew is gambling in the forecastle. She will strike and sink and split."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

PHRASEOLOGY: *Before the court is John Lindsay, 35, of Fellows Road, Hampstead, London, who has denied conspiracy to publish obscene films. Lindsay is said by the prosecution to have made 29 films in a Birmingham secondary school, hotel bridal suites and country cottages, depicting sex "in the nastiest, rawest fashion." He has admitted making "blue" movies for a Dutch client, but only for showing abroad.*

Asked why, if the films were to be sold abroad, one film box had English writing on it, Lindsay said that Germans liked films about English girls.

The judge asked: How many Germans do you think would understand the phrase "jolly hockey-sticks"?

Lindsay: "I never thought about it. I did not know the film was called 'Jolly Hockeysticks'."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Brantford, Canada

RED CARPETS: Ho Chi Minh Trail is the name chosen for a new street in the city's industrial area.

A City Council committee named two streets this week and preferred Copernicus Boulevard and Ho Chi Minh Trail to Widget Street and Roy Avenue, the other names suggested.

Harding Carpets Ltd., whose new plant is to be on Ho Chi Minh Trail, is not enthusiastic about the name. "It seems very out of place", Frank Farr, the plant manager, said. "I think some kind of protest is in order."

GLOBE AND MAIL

London

DOUBLE THINK: *Thinking we're not hypocritical is our biggest hypocrisy; for actually there seems to be plenty about. And I don't mean just hangover hypocrisy of the traditional sort—'charitable' ladies who pay £25 for the tickets to the ball and £250 for the dress they wear to it. There's a fresh new set of progressives, too [Katherine Whitehorn writes].*

Hypocrisy is often just a desperate attempt to bridge the gap between what you aspire to and what you are: moral costume jewellery, to kid your friends and with any luck yourself, that you're not doing so badly after all. Politically, this means you can live in a ten-bedroomed house with £200 chairs and wall-to-wall whisky at the weekends, but so long as you wear jeans and not a tweed skirt you can denounce the middle classes with all the gritty passion of a starving ditchdigger.

THE OBSERVER

Paris

EUPHONY: The Prix Goncourt winner, "Emile Ajar", was lured to Paris last week by his publisher to reassure the Goncourt jury, who feared they might make themselves appear ridiculous by "crowning" some well known literary figure. It was even whispered before his appearance that the novel was the literary efforts of a computer. But "M Ajar" has since been tracked down by *Le Point*, the French weekly, though the only real disclosure he would make was that he chose his pen name because he liked the euphony of the English word for a half-open door.

THE TIMES

New York

IT'S MOIDA: *Hoping for a handsome return on the wages of sin, Mickey Cohen, gangster (retired), is now flaunting his gory past along America's chat-show celebrity route, in the course of plugging his new autobiography. His publishers met him at New York airport with a limousine, and installed him in a suite at the opulent Pierre Hotel.*

His book, called "In My Own Words," is skilfully ghosted to retain his Brooklynesque delivery. Cohen talks about "all dem killings," but admits to only one murder because, he explains, the statute of limitations has not run out on the others.

He cuts a rather preposterous figure at home in his flat near Hollywood. He is so compulsive about clean hands he gets through six large boxes of Kleenex a day—he uses three tissues just to pick up his own phone.

"De psychiatrists say I'm tryin' to wipe off all de blood," he says, although in his opinion the obsession dates more mundanely from getting inky fingers as a newspaper boy.

If Cohen has made any lasting contribution, it is that his fractured English inspired much of the Damon Runyon vocabulary in the "Guys and Dolls" Broadway stories. Runyon used to listen to Cohen for hours, back in the 1930's.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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Contempt?

BERNARD BERGONZI's "Views of Structuralism" [ENCOUNTER, July] raises a crucial question. Does he believe that what is good for the English is good for the rest of us, and, consequently, what the English don't like or understand merits no critical attention? Or, does he implicitly accept the charge made by Martin Green several years ago that the English are impervious to new currents of thought and ideas—a charge now partly abetted by the fact that the intellectually more daring of English critics (Frank Kermode and George Steiner) choose to publish elsewhere?

Surely the books deserved a deeper critical engagement than Professor Bergonzi's contemptuous dismissal. Is contempt, then, the only potent weapon in the current English critical armoury?

MOTI LAL RAINA

Chandigarh, India

IT IS SADDENING to see a former student of mine show so little capacity to read and understand what is in front of him. Dr Raina's questions are a meaningless rhetorical flourish, compounded by inaccuracy. In no sense do Frank Kermode and George Steiner "choose to publish elsewhere"; they are frequent contributors to English periodicals and their books appear regularly from London publishers. Furthermore, Continental critical theory receives plenty of respectful attention in the *TLS* and elsewhere and is very fashionable among young academics; hence, perhaps, the note of mild acerbity in my review.

What I wrote was part of my own ongoing attempt to understand and assess Structuralism, though as far as I am concerned "understanding" does not automatically equal "approval." In fact, I described Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* and Roland Barthes' *S/Z* as "important books", gave them as much space as I could (and would have liked more) and said that Culler's was "highly intelligent" and Barthes' was "quite dazzling." This does not sound to me like contemptuous dismissal.

BERNARD BERGONZI

Warwick

Confucius Confused

MANY OTHER READERS of Michael Loewe's interesting article "The Vilification of Confucius", [ENCOUNTER, November] must have been disappointed that the illustration you gave was not a (conjectural) portrait of Confucius but a (conjectural) portrait of someone else. Transliterated, the Chinese caption reads "Ya Shêng Mêng Tzu Hsiang", meaning "Portrait of Mencius, the lesser Sage."

Was Confucius himself not available for comment?

CHRISTOPHER CULLEN

School of African Studies
University of London

Fair Play

BRIAN GLANVILLE ["Winning at All Costs", ENCOUNTER, August] did not have to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to uncover evidence showing that a society's sport reflects their illnesses. It was T. H. Huxley who said, "I have never been able to understand why pigeon-shooting at Hurlington should be refined and polite, while a rat-catching match in Whitechapel is low."

Gentlemen, load your weapons! "Gentlemen"?

STUART M. WIDMAN

Faculty of Law
Institute of Administration
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria, Nigeria

"All Keynesians Now?"

TWO INFERENCES (mine) from Tim Congdon's essay [ENCOUNTER, April 1975] are possibly worthy of his comment.

1. There is a widespread tendency in both scientific and not-so-scientific researches to be very careless about checking out references. Castles are frequently built on what somebody *says* that somebody else demonstrated while the original sources are left to gather dust in some forgotten corner. (Your recent series on Witchcraft highlights the same tendency, as does Arthur Koestler's excellent study in his book *The Sleepwalkers*.)

2. When the significance of a synthesis embodying new observations is materially influenced by attributing to it the blessings of a guru who died more than thirty years ago, one is entitled to question whether the synthesis can be said to lie in the domain of science. Tim Congdon's essay offers strong support for those who would label Economics as a pseudo-science with substantial emphasis on the *pseudo*. It would be laughable if in the no less chaotic field of small particle physics the validity of current theories which introduce properties of matter with such unlikely names as "charm" and "colour" depended upon finding reference to them in the works of Einstein.

W. F. COWAN

Pulmac Research Ltd.,
Montréal, Canada

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The Chesterton Review

The Journal of the Chesterton Society

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE REVIEW INCLUDE:

"Chesterton as an Edwardian Novelist"
by John Batchelor, Ph.D. (Cantab.) of the University of Birmingham.

"A Lawyer's View of Chesterton"
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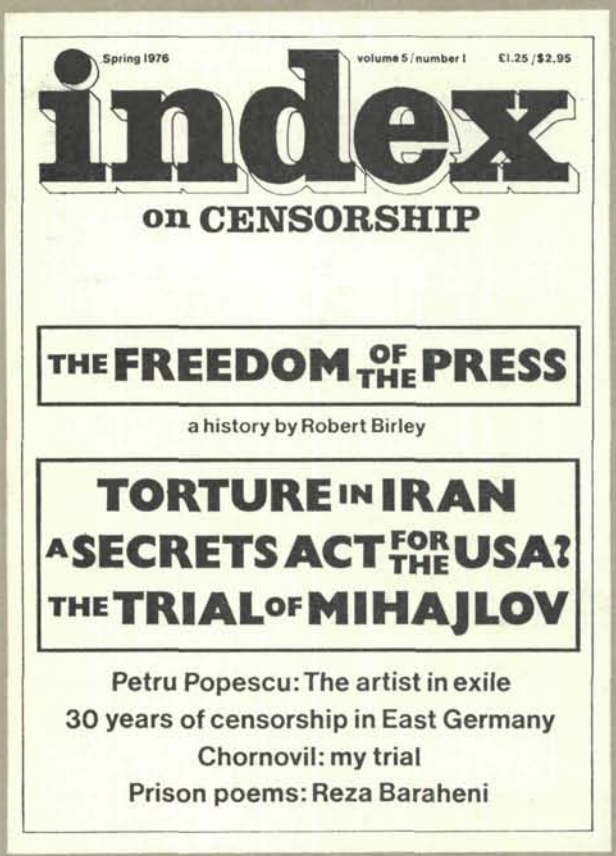
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